

I authored this report and volunteered it to my Wellesley colleagues in 1998, with the request that they “please keep [it] confidential to the Wellesley College Community.” I recently discovered that they had disregarded this request from the outset: A detailed discussion of Racism at Wellesley can be found in Sigrid Metz-Göckel’s Exzellenz und Elite im amerikanischen Hochschulsystem: Portrait eines Women’s College (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag, 2004), 185-188, based on research she completed in 2000. Perhaps it will continue to be of use to prospective students, faculty and staff and anyone else interested in the history and character of Wellesley College.

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FINAL DRAFT

RACISM AT WELLESLEY

Causes and Containment

A report sponsored by
The Black Task Force
The Black Women's Support Group
The Committee Against Racism and Discrimination
The Minority Recruitment, Hiring and Retention Committee
The Multicultural Council
The Office of Religious and Spiritual Life

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I. Introduction

This analysis originated in a May 1997 memo to the Minority Recruitment, Hiring, and Retention Committee (henceforth the MRHR), in response to a discussion of the 1989 *Task Force on Racism Report* (henceforth the TFRR). The MRHR decided that it might be of use to the larger College community, and critiqued it accordingly. Subsequent drafts were critiqued by the Black Women's Support Group (BWSG), the Black Task Force (BTF), the Committee Against Racism and Discrimination (CARD) and various other members of the faculty, staff, and administration. All factual corrections received up through March 20, 1998 have been incorporated into this draft. It is to be hoped that this analysis will continue to evolve alongside the discussions it generates.

This report is intended *only* for purposes of internal self-criticism and growth and is *not for distribution outside the Wellesley College community*. Not every member of every committee or group sponsoring this report endorses every statement in it. But all believe it should be read by those to whom it is being sent; and that the issues it addresses should be examined and discussed by the Wellesley community. All believe, in addition, that discussion needs to focus on the issues raised in this report rather than on the personalities behind it; and that individuals involved in generating it need to be protected against institutional and/or professional retaliation for speaking freely.¹ For these reasons, *all individuals who have contributed their voices, stories, thoughts, and efforts to this report remain anonymous*.

The analysis proposed herein focuses on the racial and ethnic climate at Wellesley for minority faculty, but also addresses issues of concern to minority students and staff. It is based on personal observations and experiences at Wellesley, informal discussions with students, faculty and staff at Wellesley, comparing notes with individuals who are more familiar with Smith and Bryn Mawr, and minority faculty member experiences at five other institutions (Georgetown, Harvard, Michigan, Stanford, and UCSD). This analysis targets certain problematic phenomena at Wellesley that have been noted not only in the TFRR, but also in the 30 May 1997 *Report of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Race and Diversity at Wellesley College* (henceforth the AHWGRD), in the discussion of that report at the special meeting of Academic Council called for that purpose on 4 June 1997 (henceforth the SMAC), and in discussion with other members of the Wellesley community. All of these phenomena are problematic for all minority faculty at Wellesley.

¹One individual put it this way: "After seeing the support for anonymity from minority faculty, and noticing that the objections to anonymity, and free-and-open-speech arguments were only invoked by European-Americans, who, by their very background and status in society are more likely to feel safe speaking out, I concede that anonymity is justified in this case. The key issue here is creating "safe" environments for minority individuals to speak out. It is my fervent hope that the discussions engendered by this document will ultimately lead to an environment in which anonymity is no longer required, because everyone feels safe to speak their mind."

The analysis seeks, first, to defend a theory that explains the data of these phenomena as manifestations of more deeply rooted norms, values and habits of behavior. Few of these are unique to Wellesley, but their conjoint configuration is, and creates a racial climate not replicated in other academic institutions. Second, the analysis seeks to estimate realistically how much of an improvement of this racial climate is possible for Wellesley minority faculty given its origins and causes. Third, the analysis recommends some steps that can be taken in this direction.

II. Racism at Wellesley: The Data

(A) *Data identified conjointly by the TFRR, AHWGRD, and SMAC* include the following experiences of minority individuals at Wellesley (mostly but not only students):

(1) Racial ignorance:

(a) The TFRR reports minority individuals' being made publicly uncomfortable by being asked to speak for their entire ethnic or racial group (pp. 21, 31, 33); and by being treated as an object of study (pp. 21, 32).

(b) On the other hand, at the SMAC, AHWGRD members also reported minority students' feeling that their European-American classmates did not take their lives seriously and did not seem to believe they had anything to learn from them or from their race.

(c) At the SMAC there were a number of requests from other faculty for additional individual student testimony and concrete anecdotal evidence of Wellesley's racism.

(2) Cultural repression:

(a) The TFRR reports that minority individuals often feel silenced or repressed by oppressive enforcement through social disapproval of Wellesley's "genteel, white gloves" code of behavior (pp. 25, 26, 32, 33).

(b) The AHWGRD also notes the expectation of a "high level of 'civility'" in student dorms (p. 3), and the assumption that "tolerance is part of etiquette rather than one of the prizes that come with education" (p. 4).

(c) At the SMAC,

(i) the "false façade of civility and impeccable manners" minority students at Wellesley learn to adopt in the presence of their teachers was remarked upon, as was

(ii) the corresponding fear many minority individuals at Wellesley feel of speaking their version of the truth. It was also remarked that

(iii) Wellesley tends to exclude or silence those with a different perspective, such as one that is conservative or uncomfortable with some of Wellesley's professed multiculturalist goals.

(iv) A traditional, decades-old institutional disinclination to embrace contemporary culture was criticized for discouraging student participation, first, on committees - by interviewing and vetting student-selected

representatives; and second, in the relaxed, integrated multicultural settings created by live pop music concerts, by refusing funding for such concerts on campus.

(3) The stigmatization of difference:

(a) The TFRR reports complaints that minority individuals' personal or cultural preferences and lifestyles are ignored or disregarded by policy decisions or long-standing Wellesley conventions that assume that everyone is the same (pp. 21, 32).

(b) The TFRR further reports minority individuals' being made to feel different or abnormal because of their failure to conform to some of Wellesley's conventions (pp. 21, 22, 32).

(c) Similarly, the AHWGRD notes the "deep bitterness of African-American and Hispanic-American students ... [about] their outcast status ... driven by an acute awareness that they do not fit into the dominant racial, religious and cultural norms of the College" (p. 9).

(d) At the SMAC, a minority senior faculty member reported being threatened by a white faculty member junior in status to himself that he would "pay" for organizing critical dissent to a white senior faculty's work on race.

(4) Social inauthenticity:

(a) The TFRR reports many minority individuals' feeling isolated and lonely because of inauthentic social relations, i.e. a lack of genuine friendliness or connection despite high levels of social activity in the dorms or on campus (pp. 27-29, 31, 33).

(b) The AHWGRD also noted a "mismatch between College rhetoric about diversity² and practice" (p. 2), its "Big Lie" about itself as a "haven from the lacerating racial storms and uniquely hurtful small race nastiness that is so much a part of daily life elsewhere" (p. 5) and its "shyness" about bad publicity (p. 4).

(c) Similarly, at the SMAC there was criticism of the Wellesley administration's tendency to react to how racist incidents made Wellesley look rather than to their substance, and to the gap between theory and practice.

(B) Additional data identified by the AHWGRD and the SMAC include

(1) Conflict-aversion:

(a) A central theme of the AHWGRD is Wellesley's failure to educate itself and its students about the realities of a culturally integrated community because

²The term "diversity" will be used in this report only when quoting others' use of it, since it is basically a euphemism for "integration" (on the use of euphemisms at Wellesley, see III.B and IV.I.1, below). Whereas this use of the term "diversity" is too recent to have acquired a backlog of negative connotations, the term "integration" reminds us of the history and continuity of this struggle; how very, very long we have been fighting it; and how much progress remains yet to be made. Also see Clifford Adelman, "Diversity: Walk the Walk, and Drop the Talk," *Change* (July-August 1997), 34-45, and Samuel L. Myers, Jr., "Why Diversity is a Smoke Screen for Affirmative Action," *Change* (July / August 1997), 25-32, which argues that diversity policies thwart the goals of affirmative action.

of its "shared aversion to conflict on the part of students, faculty, and administrative officers" (p. 4).

(b) Similarly, at the SMAC the tremendous pressure to subscribe to Wellesley's conflict-aversiveness was noted, as was its unhealthy effect of stunting or thwarting the development of an individual sense of self.

(2) The marginalization of anti-racist initiatives:

(a) The AHWGRD notes Wellesley's treatment of race as an "external political disruption to the operation of the College that must be contained in order to protect the system's mission of providing a liberal education" (p. 6), and its "[h]ostility to the goals of racial diversity and multiculturalism as well as the simple pursuit of self-interest in a regime that does not currently reward institution change in racial matters" (p. 6).

(b) Similarly, there were several comments at the SMAC about the marginality and administrative impotence of Wellesley's current anti-racism committees. The lack of faculty incentives for implementing anti-racism initiatives was noted, as was the administration's de facto subversion of existing committees by forming new ones in response to each new incident.

(C) *One further datum demonstrated in the SMAC and its aftermath* was

(1) Political perfectionism:

On at least two occasions, suggestions were made that everyone socialized into a racist society is racist to some degree; that alerting another person to their own manifestations of racism can be a gift and a motivation to develop one's character rather than an insult; and that workshops in which individuals verbally acknowledge and analyze their own racism can be a healthy antidote to deep socialization into racist values. Resistance to these suggestions seems to run very deep. Reactions to them included

(a) statements that no one has the authority to call anyone else a racist because racism is a motive and motives are not externally observable; that "breaking down," or "confessing sin" is inappropriate in an academic context; and that the word "racist" is inherently unproductive and should not be used.

(b) Subsequently, some faculty complained that the first speaker to make these suggestions, who was not a faculty member, should not have been allowed to speak at all.

(c) Further discussion on the internet expressed concerns, not about whether owning one's own racism would be honest or forthright, but rather about what it *would lead to*: "a confessional rather than an analytical conversation," an "inappropriate valorization of confession," to "paying attention to spiritual states rather than institutional behavior," the conclusion that "maybe [racism] is inevitable and there's no point in trying to overcome it," the "difficult[y] if not impossib[ility of] distinguish[ing] between the racism of people who set fire to black churches and the racism of someone who writes graffiti on a door, ... and someone who thinks, but doesn't say something of the form 'Isn't that typical behavior for ...!'"

(d) In response to these concerns, an analysis was offered of the controversial assumptions underlying the dichotomies and inferences they expressed, as well as several suggested readings on these issues. But these elicited no further response from those who had voiced those concerns.

III. Causes: The Failure of Feminism at Wellesley

The TFRR rightly observes that "racism/race relations take place within a broader Wellesley culture" (p. 3). What is needed, then, is a theory that identifies the salient characteristics of that broader culture that have the greatest impact on race relations at Wellesley. The theory defended here as best explaining all of the data collected under II. - and then some - is one that treats racism at Wellesley as a byproduct of the institution's enforcement of a conservative and conventional image of women, i.e. as a symptom of certain pathological characteristics of traditional women's culture in general, and traditional elitist white heterosexual American women's culture more specifically.³

(A) *Pathological characteristics of traditional women's culture in general* include

- (1) self-enforced conformism;
- (2) repression of difference;
- (3) repression of self-assertion and self-expression;
- (4) devaluation of self-fulfillment;
- (5) valorization of self-sacrifice.

These characteristics may be viewed as necessary mechanisms of survival and reproduction under traditional patriarchy. Any authoritarian social arrangement seeks to enforce conformity, silence dissent, and exact obedience from the disadvantaged. Traditional women's culture survived its intimate proximity to patriarchy by internalizing and self-policing these values. Whereas (1) and (2) can be equated with marriageability, (3) - (5) can be equated with obedience.

(B) *Pathological characteristics of traditional elitist white heterosexual American women's culture specifically* include

- (1) perfectionism;
- (2) a focus on appearance at the expense of reality;

³After reading the first draft of this discussion, colleagues in the social sciences cited of substantial research in women's studies - particularly women's history and psychology - that tends to confirm its hypotheses about women's culture in general and white heterosexual American middle-class women's culture in particular. Since this is a conceptual rather than a sociological or historical analysis, this research is not discussed here. Nevertheless Jean Baker Miller's groundbreaking *Toward a New Psychology of Women* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1976) deserves special mention. It treats in greater depth many of the pathological characteristics enumerated below, and in addition suggests ways in which they may evolve into healthy ones.

- (3) denial and naiveté;
- (4) nonconfrontationality;
- (5) a sense of inadequacy and inferiority;
- (6) envy.⁴

These characteristics may be viewed as the result of the dissemination and enforcement of an originally southern patriarchal ideology that sanctified Christian ideals of selfless moral perfection and idealized upper-class white heterosexual women as symbols of moral purity and protected sexual innocence. This ideology legitimated the procreation of new generations of gratis enslaved labor through coercive miscegenation with enslaved black women. Whereas (1)-(3) can be equated with acceptance of this ideology, and (4) with obedience to it, (5) and (6) are two of its psychological consequences.⁵

For most white American middle- and upper-middle-class women, acceptance of and obedience to this ideology have been additional imperatives of survival and reproduction under traditional patriarchy until very recently. In our national culture this ideology is now manifested in the media and fashion industry ideal of the thin, rich, pampered, protected, blonde, upper-middle class heterosexual child-woman which is used to sell just about everything - by convincing women that they will achieve this ideal, and men that they will obtain her, by buying the latest, improved product of whatever kind.

(C) *How this pathology manifests itself at Wellesley:* Wellesley traditionally has sought to fashion a highly protected and elite environment for its young women students, who have been drawn overridingly from the sheltered middle and upper-middle classes (TFRR, p. 19) and groomed for the role of helpmeet to upper-middle class white men, preferably from Harvard. Wellesley's version of "posture shots," instruction in etiquette and deportment, and isolation of the occasional, lone black woman student in segregated living quarters are now a thing of the past: Wellesley now admits more working-class students than other comparable colleges. But that past is not that distant. Alumnae continue to be major resources for Wellesley's fund-raising efforts and an important presence on campus (TFRR, p. 21) - at the College Club, on the Board of Trustees, at on-campus events, and in influential positions of institutional power. Wellesley alumnae are preferentially hired in administration and staff positions, where they naturally recruit, hire, and

⁴This discussion follows John Rawls' analysis of envy as the willingness to deprive oneself of some coveted good if this will have the effect of depriving more fortunate others of that coveted good as well (*A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1971), p. 532 ff.).

⁵Some white women colleagues who read the first draft of this report recommended even greater emphasis on the deleterious effects of patriarchy than that which has been given them in this and the preceding section. However, as we see by comparing Wellesley with other women's colleges such as Smith or Bryn Mawr, the deleterious effects of patriarchy do not determine the unique form racism takes at Wellesley (absent a convincing argument that the effects of patriarchy have been more deleterious at Wellesley than elsewhere). Hence we must look elsewhere for the factors relevant to explaining it.

support students, faculty and staff who are perceived to be similar in appearance, class background, and values - and therefore "fit in" to "the Wellesley way."

Correspondingly, service personnel - where most minority workers on campus are to be found - and support staff are treated with condescension and disrespect by students as well as faculty and administration. They are subject to insulting and inhumane treatment by students, who are not reprimanded for their behavior.⁶ The contributions of black support staff to strategies for achieving greater integration are used but not often rewarded by European-American staff, who receive the credit for these contributions. The absolutely essential contribution made by service personnel and support staff to the smooth functioning of the Wellesley campus and the successful achievement of its goals remains unacknowledged (many of these same points are made in the *Wellesley College Discussion Group Report* of 17 April 1997, henceforth the WCDGR).⁷ As one individual expressed it, "Those who get paid the least are asked often to do more and are feeling less valued." (WCDGR, p. 13)

These attitudes of condescension and disrespect extend to the treatment of Wellesley's female, overwhelmingly white student body as well. For example, Wellesley faculty have been known to exempt student majors from a field's more stringent academic requirements out of fears of lowered enrollment; change course titles out of fear that students will be too intimidated by big words to take them; inflate grades on the basis of effort when achievement is lacking; and speak disparagingly and prejudicially of what students will use, need, want, or remember of technical subjects which such faculty deem "irrelevant to their lives." Making such unfounded a priori judgments about a *male*, overwhelmingly white student body, or refusing to hold women students at a co-ed institution to the same academic standards as the men, would be unthinkable.

African-American students are particularly affected by this attitude of condescension and disrespect. For example, one African-American student with straight As in literature, French, and philosophy but a C- average in pre-med was not only permitted but encouraged to apply to medical schools. Another, with exceptional oratorical skills but severe writing problems was permitted to graduate without ever having learned to compose a written paragraph. This behavior towards all of Wellesley's young women students expresses a patriarchal attitude of paternalism toward inferiors which traditional elitist white heterosexual American women's culture has first internalized as feelings of inadequacy and inferiority (B.5), and then projected onto its younger generation

⁶For example, this past summer some of the Exploration students were known to leave fecal matter around the lavatories for the custodians to clean up.

⁷Prepared by Ampersand Associates in response to informal discussions on the College's finances conducted during the 1996-97 academic year. Future references to this report are paginated in the text. On Wellesley's elitism and lack of respect for administrative assistants and other support staff, see page 13; for the influence of large donations on College policy and programs, see pages 16-17; for Wellesley's perfectionism, see pages 10-11.

of women. Wellesley's current generation of students know they are being patronized and complain about it frequently.

These are some of the ways in which, through its longstanding fund-raising, recruiting, and hiring practices, Wellesley manifests centuries-old elitist and patriarchal class values and behaviors that undermine its efforts to integrate its environment.

(D) *Economics and the failure of feminism.* Wellesley's institutionalized, conservative anti-feminism, then, is a reaction - although not the only possible reaction - to fiscal demands. Wellesley is the wealthiest of all the women's colleges because its relatively conservative, conventional, upper-middle class heterosexual image of women reflects and reaffirms the profile of Wellesley's mostly conservative, conventional, upper-middle class alumnae donors - and so is more likely to elicit their financial support than would an image of Wellesley as a hotbed of lesbianism (as at Smith⁸) or a hotbed of radical feminism (as at Bryn Mawr). As a Wellesley student put it, "At Smith they're redefining what it means to be a woman; at Wellesley they learn to succeed by following the rules." (Also see TFRR, pp. 18-19)

Since Wellesley's fiscal wellbeing is the bottom line, no measure that might threaten that wellbeing by antagonizing or scaring off donors is seriously considered by the Wellesley administration, whose values often underwrite theirs. Therefore, no measure that seriously undermines Wellesley's conservative and conventional image of women who "follow the rules" is seriously considered. Those "rules" are traditionally disadvantageous to minorities. This means that, although there are some useful and important things that can be done to improve the atmosphere for minority faculty at Wellesley, "structural and cultural transformation" (TFRR, p. 6) of Wellesley College into a "truly multi-racial community" (TFRR, pp. 1, 4) is not likely. This would effect a complete destabilization of Wellesley's conservative and conventional image of women, and therefore is not likely to occur.

A further consequence of III.B is the deep-rootedness of the pathology itself. The more intense the striving for perfection, the deeper the sense of inadequacy and inferiority, and the more highly motivated the denial and repression of flaws or failures. The resulting defensiveness and inability to think clearly and objectively about this pathology presents an enormous obstacle to acknowledging and coming to grips with the problems it causes. In addition to the historical, social, and economic considerations just mentioned, these psychological obstacles to acknowledging and dissecting the pathology itself makes it effectively intractable.

This pathology and its effects on minority faculty are dissected in this analysis, first, because they are there and need to be named; second, as an

⁸which nevertheless runs a close second to Wellesley in fund-raising success.

expression of intellectual respect which, by not deceiving, patronizing, or insulting the reader with lies, codes, euphemisms, or minced words, thereby subverts another Wellesley convention (WCDGR, pp. 15-16); and third, so as not to waste the reader's time. But the entrenchedness of this pathology in Wellesley's culture underscores the importance of being realistic about the extent to which the environment for minority faculty at Wellesley is capable of improvement.

(IV) How the Theory Sketched in III. Explains the Data Collected Under II., and Some Additional Phenomena As Well:

(A) *Racial ignorance.* II.A.1.a and c can be in part explained by III.B.3. That is, those who have been brought up in a "protected" middle- or upper-middle-class environment, "shielded" from the hard facts of life, or just plain segregated from other races or ethnic groups (AHWGDR, pp. 2-3) will of course exhibit denial and/or naiveté about such topics. They may ask naive, insensitive or rudely invasive personal questions of minority individuals, in a sincere but misplaced desire to gain knowledge about them. "Can I feel your hair?" is a well-known howler among African-Americans; but asking minority individuals to recount at length their experiences of racial or ethnic humiliation, or singling out a minority student in class to explain the attitudes of her racial or ethnic group to her European-American classmates expresses the same brand of naiveté. Similarly, some may be skeptical that life could be as difficult for minority individuals in mainstream American society as is claimed, unresponsive to evidence to the contrary, and correspondingly uninterested in the minority experience (II.A.1.b). All of these cases demonstrate a failure of imagination about what it is like to be the object of such attitudes. This failure is based on ignorance of minority cultures and ignorance of the experience of otherness - which, in general, *European-Americans who were born, raised, and live in segregated European-American communities* cannot be expected to know anything about.

(B) *Racial amnesia.* But III.B.3 also sheds light on an additional phenomenon alluded to in the AHWGRD. During at least the last decade, ugly racial incidents have occurred on campus with a fair degree of regularity, virtually insuring that every incoming minority student will be traumatized at least once during her stay at Wellesley, and that minority faculty will be similarly traumatized at least once a year. It seems that each time one of these incidents occurs, the institution reacts with shocked outrage, issues public statements condemning it, holds public fora to discuss it, and appoints a committee to study it (AHWGRD, p. 6) - as though each incident is the first one of its kind, rather than merely the latest in a longstanding and predictable series of such incidents whose causes and general patterns should by now be common knowledge; and

then forgets it, never mentions it again, and proceeds as though it had not happened.⁹

Wellesley's public reaction of surprise and spin control each time one of these incidents occurs can be explained by the conjunction of III. B. 1, 2, and 3. That is, Wellesley's perfectionism inclines it to suppress and repress evidence of failure to achieve racial harmony; its naiveté inclines it to new shock and astonishment with each new racist incident; its focus on appearance at the expense of reality inclines it to invest its efforts in situational spin control rather than long-term and sustained efforts at improvement (also see II.A.4: Social inauthenticity, b-c); and its denial inclines it to behave after the fact as though the incident had not occurred. This permits the institution to indulge the repetition-compulsion to participate vicariously in the rude awakening and disillusionment of each generation of young minority women, for whom Wellesley's racism often really is their first sustained personal experience of racism.

(C) *Cultural repression.* II.A.2.a-c.i-iv are explained by III.A.1-3. That is, the institutional repression of cultural difference and individuality across races and nations of students, faculty and staff at Wellesley is the local expression of a more general, traditional, self-enforced conformity and self-censorship that is virtually universal to women's culture - regardless of the particular form and content conformity may take at a particular time and place. One former Wellesley student and staff member remarked, "At Wellesley they use the value of community as an excuse to gang up on you if you disagree." At Wellesley the form and content cultural repression takes is described as the "genteel," "high tea," "white gloves," nonconfrontational code of etiquette (on the pressure to conform, see WCDGR, p. 15). Cultural repression takes this particular form at Wellesley because Wellesley is defined and dominated by white American middle-class women, who themselves traditionally have been further conditioned by pathological characteristics of traditional elitist white heterosexual American women's culture such as perfectionism (III.B.1), nonconfrontationality (III.B.4) and envy (III.B.6).

(D) *The more general obsession with conformist repression of difference.* But there are other conventions of behavior peculiar and local to Wellesley, enforced with equal fervor, that reproduce repression of difference from generation to generation of faculty members - and so reproduce Wellesley's conformist culture - that III.A-B can also explain.

(1) One is the tradition of *classroom visits of junior faculty by senior faculty*, and the use of the resulting written evaluations as a variable in weighing a candidate's tenurability. In most other academic institutions, it is assumed that each young teacher has to find her or his own style and strategies that work for the particular class of students and content of the course in

⁹The attempt to combat this type of amnesia is, of course, part of the MRHR's rationale for undertaking their longitudinal study of minority faculty retention patterns at Wellesley.

question. This process is never entirely trial-and-error, since junior professors ordinarily have had at least one year of experience as graduate teaching assistants, teaching evaluations are used, and these are always supplemented by informal conversations with senior colleagues about effective teaching methods. In addition, most institutions have some equivalent of Wellesley's Learning and Teaching Center, which provide media and consultational resources through which professors may choose voluntarily to improve their teaching skills.

By contrast, the assumption that there is a right way to teach a course, regardless of the particular teacher, the particular group of students, or the particular content of that particular course is not (to say the least) widely shared. The assumption that senior faculty members on one- or two-time official visits to a junior faculty member's class can get an accurate reading of how that class is conducted in their absence is even more debatable. And the assumption that one teacher might be justifiably criticized, penalized, or fired for not conforming to the styles and strategies that work for another teacher is not generally considered defensible at all. At Wellesley, however, these assumptions are so deeply entrenched that they are not regarded as open to question. They cramp the styles of junior faculty and inhibit their creativity in the classroom. They also serve the important function of weeding out those teachers whose styles and strategies are noticeably different from those of their colleagues.

This selection process is applied generally across all junior faculty at Wellesley. But since the styles and strategies of racial or ethnic minority faculty are often noticeably different from those of the white mainstream, it has a disproportionately negative effect on them. Minority junior faculty have been denied reappointment for no more than this. III.A.1-3 explain the disproportionately negative attention they get at Wellesley as the consequence of the way certain pathological characteristics of traditional women's culture are manifested in this particular institution.

(2) Selecting the institution's senior faculty entirely from its pre-existing pool of junior faculty is another unusual institutional mechanism at Wellesley that represses difference and so reproduces conformity. In most other colleges and universities, a department may recruit an already-tenured, senior member from elsewhere after reviewing her or his record according to whatever variables the department finds important: teaching evaluations, administrative ability, collegiality, research, or some combination thereof. At Wellesley, by contrast, the presumption is that no one who has not risen through the ranks of junior faculty at Wellesley is eligible (experienced enough? sufficiently knowledgeable about "the Wellesley way"? sufficiently indoctrinated?) for a senior appointment. Since minority junior faculty tend to manifest difference - of self-presentation, lifestyle, communication style, professional values, behavioral style, etc. - to a particularly threatening degree, it is particularly difficult for them to survive this homogenizing process in any case. A minority faculty member who failed to survive it put it this way: "Wellesley's minority faculty are even expected to all be different in the same way!" One consequence is that there are

very few tenured minority faculty, and no regular channels for bringing more safely and permanently into the system.¹⁰ A second and equally insidious consequence is that Wellesley's repressive culture of conformity thereby reproduces itself from one generation of faculty to the next, insuring that, for the most part, only those who conform to and uphold the requirements of "the Wellesley way" are in a position to choose those who will succeed them.

(3) *The institutional response to the TFRR's recommendation of ten target of opportunity hires* is, in this context, instructive: Of the ten appointments recommended, Wellesley obtained funding for five from its Board of Trustees. Of those five, only one was hired with tenure.¹¹ Two more were recruited as visitors with the presumption of tenure after one year, which they received. And two more were recruited to tenure-track positions without promise or presumption of tenure, of whom one has withdrawn from tenure review. Thus out of a recommended ten hires, only one was hired with tenure and only three have it as of this writing - nine years later. Wellesley's resistance and reluctance even to begin effecting permanent "structural and cultural transformation" into a "truly multi-racial community" - i.e. *to share power with those who are different* - is clearly very great.

(4) *Allocating to a single, college-wide committee ultimate power and authority to reappoint, tenure, promote and financially reward faculty from each academic department* is another highly unusual Wellesley practice. At most other academic institutions, the power and authority to make these decisions are largely localized within each department. Where departments are healthy and have the respect of their administration, college-wide or university-wide committees who review a department's reappointment, tenure, and promotion decisions usually defer to the department's scholarly and professional expertise by seconding those decisions. Department chairs are allocated a certain lump sum for merit and cost-of-living increases to be distributed among individual faculty members of that department as the chair sees fit.¹² The president, provost, chancellor, or dean has the authority to reverse on appeal controversial decisions by a department or university-wide committee. But when any of these functions are taken out of the hands of the academic department and assumed by the administration, this means that the administration perceives the department

¹⁰When it was suggested to a white colleague that this problem could be solved by a regular practice of recruiting senior faculty, he protested that this would endanger junior faculty's chances of receiving tenure. But presumably this would occur only if the recruited senior faculty member's area of research and teaching specialization abutted or duplicated that of a junior faculty member. The policy, generally held in most academic institutions, of simply not recruiting senior faculty in an area already covered by junior faculty, did not strike him as a solution to the problem.

¹¹And it is of course no accident that that one is usually mistaken for a "nice white lady" of the mainstream middle class.

¹²In some universities, chairs have been known to increase senior faculty research productivity by denying cost-of-living and/or merit increases to anyone who hasn't had anything accepted for publication in the preceding year. This proves to be an amazingly effective device for overcoming "writing blocks."

as unable to govern itself properly; and that it is, in extreme cases, on the verge of receivership. Generally, a department loses its autonomy in these matters only when its faculty are either not actively contributing to its field, or not able to resolve interpersonal conflicts that obstruct departmental decision-making, or both.

At Wellesley, by contrast, the college-wide Committee on Faculty Appointments has administrative responsibility for all of these functions, and not only oversees but actively intervenes in some departmental and college-wide procedures, such as acting in an advisory capacity as to who should be awarded a funded chair. Wellesley's CFA makes final decisions on all departmental recommendations of reappointment, tenure, and promotion, and directly determines who gets merit increases and why. Since the President and Dean of the College each have only one vote, there is effectively no independent body with the power of veto or approval over CFA decisions. The lack of administrative autonomy accorded Wellesley's academic departments would seem to express the administration's lack of confidence in them (on the faculty perception of the senior administration's distrust of them, see WCDGR, pp. 14-15), just as the lack of independent veto authority accorded to senior administrative staff would seem to express the community's lack of confidence in them (see 5. The administrative micromanagement of Wellesley's affairs by its Board of Trustees, below).

As a powerful, democratically elected committee, the CFA could play the important role of insuring that democratic principles of equal representation are respected in all matters regarding faculty reappointment, tenure, promotion, and merit increases. Unfortunately it does not play that role. *No African-American, Hispanic-American, Asian-American, or Native American has ever been elected to the CFA by the Wellesley faculty. No African-American, Hispanic-American, Asian-American, or Native American has ever been hired or appointed to the senior administrative roles of President, Dean, or Associate Dean of the College. And the justice and value of retaining an assigned representative from the Black Task Force is under constant attack.* When the lack of elected representation on the CFA by faculty of color is noted, the explanation often given for the absence of blacks is that unfortunately, "they're all crazy."¹³ The selection, composition, and functioning of the CFA represent and reinforce the political conservatism of the Wellesley faculty more generally, by granting job security and financial rewards overridingly to those who reflect and perpetuate the pathologies of traditional elitist white heterosexual American women's culture.

(5) *The administrative micromanagement of Wellesley's affairs by its Board of Trustees* is highly unusual in academia. At most functional

¹³Such a comment is just one of the rationales by which some European-Americans on College-wide committees presume to arrogate to themselves the official right to judge, in euphemistically described Black Task Force "reviews," the legitimacy and efficacy of the Black Task Force's mandate to represent the interests of Wellesley's miniscule black community.

academic institutions, the administrative autonomy of the institution, and its independence from trustee pressures and agendas, are not only taken for granted but ethically required in order to avoid conflicts of interest. Senior administrative staff are hired on the basis of their recognized experience and expertise in running an institution, by trustees who express their confidence in those they have hired to do the job by letting them do it: by deferring to them on substantive matters of setting and implementing policy, and absenting themselves from hands-on involvement in the ongoing life of the institution.

By contrast, Wellesley's trustees have an intense and pervasive involvement in upper-level administrative decision-making. For example, they have had influential voices in such hands-on matters as the permissible number of FTEs the College can have, the course load full-time faculty should teach, the appropriate candidates for upper-level staff appointments, the number and funding of Target of Opportunity appointments to be permitted, and special events the College hosts. Trustee resistance to deferring to the professional and administrative expertise of those who are hired to run Wellesley advertises a fundamental lack of confidence in the ability of women successfully to manage their own affairs, no matter how highly trained or competent they may be - and thereby advertises the internalized feelings of inadequacy and inferiority that characterize traditional elitist white heterosexual American women's culture (III.B.5). Senior administrative staff are then put in the impossible position of being criticized by the Wellesley community for failing to initiate change, when coming into open conflict with Wellesley's trustees could cost them their jobs; and so of being the target of both the trustees' and the community's distrust and lack of confidence. This, in turn, perpetuates the traditional stereotype of women as incapable of autonomous leadership and bold initiatives, and thereby exacerbates the conformist and repressive pathology of traditional elitist white heterosexual American women's culture in the Wellesley environment.

(E) *The stigmatization of difference.* Intentional color-blindness (TFRR, pp. 3, 4, 5, 18) strictly requires only overlooking or tolerating difference. It does not require actively punishing or ostracizing it in the ways described in II.A.3.a-d. This phenomenon can be explained by III.A.1-5. That is, self-assertion and self-expression manifest individuality and so difference. Traditional women's culture, and traditional elitist white heterosexual American women's culture more specifically, seek to repress difference (III.A.1-3). Similarly, actively seeking self-fulfillment through self-assertion and self-expression manifest individuality. Traditional women's culture, and traditional elitist white heterosexual American women's culture more specifically, encourage self-sacrifice (III.A.4-5) - to one's spouse, family, and/or community - as a source of self-esteem and self-empowerment. Thus traditional elitist white heterosexual American women's culture encourages women to seek self-fulfillment through self-abnegation. This is paradoxical only in theory, since in practice, no matter how much one is ostensibly rewarded for acts of self-abnegation, the underlying message has to be that the self in question has only abnegative or sacrificial value (III.A.4). This devaluation of the individual self contributes to the sense of

inadequacy, inferiority, and envy (III.B.4-5) that is the malignant side of the perfectionism (III.B.1) of traditional elitist white heterosexual American women's culture. And the sacrifice of the self in service to others obscures from oneself the true needs and desires of the self, which in turn contributes to the denial, naiveté (III.B.3) and superficiality (III.B.2) that further characterizes traditional elitist white heterosexual American women's culture.

Wellesley's motto may not be *exactly* "Service with a smile," but it is much too close to that for comfort. Officially valorizing service over self-expression - *and more importantly, over an equitable balance between them* - encourages faculty as well as staff to sacrifice their personal time, their energy, their health, and/or their research on the altar of teaching, administration, or other service to the Wellesley community, and then to feel resentful and envious because these sacrifices are not sufficiently appreciated. (TFRR, p. 30) One departing staff member commented, "Wellesley uses people up and then throws them away." Just as expressing individuality conflicts with the requirement of conformity and the repression of difference, seeking self-fulfillment conflicts with the requirement of self-sacrifice. Thus self-assertion, self-expression and self-fulfillment offend against not one but two deep values of traditional elitist white heterosexual American women's culture - conformity and self-sacrifice - and are stigmatized accordingly at Wellesley (on the repression of creativity at Wellesley, see WCDGR, pp. 7, 10, 17, 20). Compared to most other academic institutions, Wellesley's tolerance for individuality and self-assertion is very low.

Exhortations to service and self-sacrifice may have a particularly bitter taste to Wellesley's African-American faculty, whose ancestors were enslaved and whose living relatives often include many who have worked as servants in the private or public sectors (maids, cooks, nannies, sex workers, chauffeurs, shoe-shine "boys"; porters, bus drivers, postal clerks, janitors, sharecroppers, etc.) because no other job or educational opportunities were open to them. To them the ideological valorization of service over self-expression and self-fulfillment may look too much like the internalization and perversion of a politically coerced necessity into a moral virtue. Since few of them have had the opportunity to feel guilt about overprivileged upbringings, or the need to expiate it, this is one "moral high ground" they may not feel they need to occupy.

(F) *The stigmatization of racial and ethnic difference in particular.* The stigmatization of difference has a particularly pernicious effect on minority faculty at Wellesley, because at the outset they are led to believe that their particular modes of cultural, racial or ethnic self-expression are valuable contributions to Wellesley's attempt to integrate its environment. This affirmative attitude toward difference is an intrinsic part of the public image Wellesley projects (again see II.A.4.b-c). Thus they are led to believe that their particular ways of expressing their individuality, and so achieving self-fulfillment, are equally valued. They then often find, upon entry into the Wellesley environment, that these most centrally defining character dispositions are in fact liabilities rather than assets. They are given the message, in a manner

ranging from the subtle to the brutal (it is not all white-gloved gentility after all; see, for example, II.A.3.d) to fall into line. And if they do not, they are stigmatized accordingly. Many minority faculty at Wellesley feel deeply betrayed by what they perceive as the institution's hypocrisy, trickery, and underhandedness in these matters. Thus one senior minority faculty member at Wellesley proudly refers to himself as an "obnoxious black man;" another to herself as "the most universally disliked person on campus." Of course these individuals do not really believe of themselves that they are obnoxious or unlikeable. They are merely echoing back to the Wellesley community in an ironic register the evaluations the Wellesley community has communicated to them. And they are voicing these evaluations in order to subvert the superficial façade of racial harmony that Wellesley presents to the world and to itself.

(1) *A personal anecdote.* "I was explicitly recruited and hired to Wellesley on the strength of my professional productivity in two separate fields, to teach full-time in one of them. The other is directly concerned with fighting racism and xenophobia. There can be no serious question that my professional activity has taken the particular form it has because of my racial and ethnic status. At my first merit review I received the standard letter requesting evidence of all professional productivity over the preceding three years. I confirmed with the Merit Awards Committee secretary that this meant *all* professional productivity, and so compiled the evidence accordingly and enlisted my department's secretary to help reformat my c.v. according to these specifications. It was a lot of work for both of us. The merit review letter I received acknowledged the value of my work in the field in which I teach at Wellesley, but did not mention my work in the other field (the one concerned with fighting racism and xenophobia) at all. I called a member of the committee for an explanation and was told that, according to Wellesley's three-fold criteria for evaluating faculty - teaching, research, and service, I had already reached the maximum research merit amount I could achieve through my research in the one field, so no one had bothered looking at the work I submitted for review in the other. It was further suggested that if I wanted the work in this other field recognized as well, perhaps I should consider teaching courses in the corresponding department."

(G) *Professional perfectionism.* The above anecdote illustrates not only the stigmatization of racial and ethnic difference, but also professional perfectionism, and the marginalization of anti-racist initiatives (see especially J.1, below), all of which are best explained as by-products of traditional elitist white heterosexual American women's culture. Let us begin with professional perfectionism, a particular manifestation of the perfectionism inherent in traditional elitist white heterosexual American women's culture more generally (III.B.1). In most other academic institutions, individual faculty members are valued and rewarded for the distinctive ways in which each contributes to the wellbeing of the institution. Although all may fulfill the same range of professional obligations (teaching, research, and service) over time, no one is expected to fulfill all to the same degree or with the same degree of success. It is

understood that some people are better teachers than administrators or researchers and so allocate their time and energies accordingly, whereas others have a different balance of talents and so allocate their time and energies differently. Conversely, individuals are not penalized economically for failing to achieve in one area if they are making valuable contributions in another. Most academic institutions function on the basis of a division of labor that permits each individual to contribute in the area(s) in which she or he naturally excels.

At Wellesley, by contrast, all faculty are expected to perform outstandingly in all three, and are penalized economically for failing to do so in any of them. Since this expectation is impossible to satisfy, everyone is penalized economically to some degree for failing to achieve perfection in some area. This is like economically penalizing a physicist for her substandard performance on the violin. It exacerbates general feelings of envy, inadequacy, and personal inferiority (III.B.5-6) that are endemic to traditional elitist white heterosexual American women's culture. Wellesley's merit review policy insures that virtually everyone will be made to feel inadequate about something, underappreciated about something else, and therefore resentful and envious toward those whose strengths are different from one's own.

Wellesley's deeply entrenched policy of requiring of all of its faculty the same quantity and quality of professional contribution, without regard to distinctive individual talents and proclivities, constitutes a deliberate decision to neglect the recognition and cultivation of individual talents and proclivities. This policy is often justified on egalitarian grounds. But egalitarianism does not legitimate treating everyone as though they were all the same. It requires according each individual equal respect. *An individual cannot be respected if their individuality is not acknowledged* (on Wellesley's lack of respect for individuals, see WCDGR, p. 13). Wellesley's "egalitarianism" would preclude the high degree of specialization that high standards of professional achievement require. This would entrench a Jill-of-all-trades culture of mediocrity rather than the culture of professional excellence at which Wellesley aims. As one individual observed, "Why are faculty members always listed [in the catalogue] as Mr. and Ms. and never as Dr.? Is it because this would make some seem different (better) than others? I worked hard for that Ph.D.!" A better explanation of Wellesley's deliberate neglect of individual talents and proclivities is that these are not valued in a culture that represses self-assertion, self-expression, and self-fulfillment (III.A.3-4).

Again the effect on minority faculty is particularly pernicious because the burdens of service - to one's wider minority community, to department and college-wide committees, to minority and nonminority students - increase in inverse proportion to their numbers. Whereas a rational and constructive solution would be to assign value proportional to the area in which time and energy is allocated, as is the norm in other academic institutions, Wellesley's response is to ignore the problem and insist that, in this respect as in others, everyone be treated as though they were exactly the same. This undermines

Wellesley's public claim that minority faculty bring special talents and contributions to Wellesley's diversity that are highly valued. Obviously they are not valued highly enough to override Wellesley's repressive demands of professional conformity. When such extra burdens are mentioned, the common institutional response is that everyone has those same burdens and all suffer equally. This dismissive response is offered as a justification for continuing to inflict these burdens on everyone rather than setting a precedent for lightening them in appropriately different ways for each.

In fact Wellesley does single out individuals for special favors, and relies on them to maintain the status quo by keeping it quiet. Individuals are selected and rewarded for defending, maintaining, promoting, or publicly modelling Wellesley's conformist and self-abnegative values: through service, self-sacrifice, conformity, and/or the repression of difference. Often these "confidential" favors are of a kind that would be open and pro forma at other institutions. Extra research funds or administrative help, a reduced teaching or committee workload, or benefits contributions during an unpaid or externally funded sabbatical are some of the resources that, elsewhere, would be allocated openly on the basis of need and/or merit. Such allocations of resources often function as public incentives to everyone to do their personal best in their given area of expertise. At Wellesley, by contrast, these resources function not as public incentives but rather as private rewards for obedience to the status quo. Disobedience and difference are correspondingly punished by withholding them - as well as by withholding more basic, needed economic perquisites of a successful professional trajectory: raises, merit increases, promotions, favorable tenure decisions. This can be particularly devastating to those who have a family to support. Wellesley thereby purchases the silence or passive acquiescence of selected individuals to its repressively conformist norms by privately playing to their individuals needs, fears, and self-interests, while at the same time publicly espousing its version of "egalitarianism." Thus Wellesley's institutional norms of conformism (III.A.1), devaluation of self-fulfillment (III.A.4), repression and denial of difference (III.A.2, B.3), hypocrisy (III.B.2), and envy (III.B.6) are honored, reinforced and promulgated even in the breach.

(H) *Social inauthenticity.* II.A.4 has been alluded to twice so far, as a factor contributing to racial amnesia (B) and the stigmatization of racial and ethnic difference (F). II.A.4.a is best explained by III.B.1,2, 4, and 5. That is, in a culture that encourages an appearance of perfect racial harmony, an avoidance of confrontation, and a sense of personal inferiority, cultivation of authentic social connection beyond the level of appearance is not an easy matter. Social relations at Wellesley differ in at least one key respect from those at most other academic institutions. There is much less overt antagonism and conflict (see II.B.1: Conflict-aversion), and much more hypocrisy and back-stabbing at Wellesley than elsewhere.

We all know that authentic connection with others sometimes requires painful candor, conflict, and the responsible mutual acknowledgement of guilt or

fault. This is hard work under the best of circumstances. But when part of the reality one is attempting to conceal from the other's view is racial or ethnic prejudice - *as though anyone raised in this culture were free of it*, the work is close to impossible. The greater the attempt to conceal these feelings, the greater the oscillation between withdrawal of contact on the one hand, and on the other, overcompensation in elaborate displays of friendliness and attempts to establish rapport. But because this behavior also expresses a defensive vigilance against the revelation of personal or political imperfection (see II.C: Political perfectionism), its inauthenticity is palpable and intractable. "Says [one foreign minority student] from Wellesley College, 'On campus the American students appear to be very friendly - at every corner one is constantly being asked "wassup" (or just "sup" for short). But, actually launch into a detailed narrative about what's happening in your life, there are no takers. Nobody has the time to listen, or care about your personal problems.'"¹⁴ The guardedness and mistrust this behavior generates - particularly among minorities who have other reasons to distrust Wellesley's culture - is equally palpable and intractable. This virtually guarantees a polite stand-off among individuals of different racial or ethnic groups who have not resolved their reactions to those who are different, in which everyone has the feeling of walking on eggshells.

II.A.4.b and c can be similarly explained. The appearance Wellesley seeks to project to the external public through its "rhetoric about diversity" (AHWGRD, p. 2) is a "Big Lie" (AHWGRD, p. 4) in several respects. It represents itself as integrated, which is true to a greater extent than many other academic institutions.¹⁵ But it also represents itself as centrally valuing integration and being nonracist, which is false. The reality is that Wellesley is no freer of racism than most other academic institutions. This is a trivial implication of its survival and flourishing in a racist society, and its population by individuals who have, of necessity, internalized the racist values of this society. The Wellesley community tends to manage its racism the way women, and white heterosexual American middle- and upper-middle-class women in particular, traditionally have managed their repugnance toward some of the more intimate and personally distasteful aspects of patriarchy: by censoring themselves (III.A.3), presenting an agreeable façade (III.B.2), and psychologically denying their repugnance (III.B.3).

(I) Conflict-aversion. II.B.1.a and b are best explained as further strategies for repressing Wellesley's racism, and manifest the more general nonconfrontationality (III.B.4) of traditional elitist white heterosexual American women's culture. That is, an obvious side-effect of the unwillingness to

¹⁴Anjali Mathur, "Wassup in America? If you want to be part of the great melting pot, you need to change your mentality, manners and menu," *The Times of India*, Education Supplement (January 19, 1998), p. 7.

¹⁵But not nearly integrated enough. Those of us who have lived in or been raised in mixed neighborhoods in cities such as Amsterdam, Berlin, Chicago, London, Los Angeles, New York, Paris, San Francisco, or Washington, D.C. carry with them an objective measure of what a racially, ethnically, and culturally integrated environment looks like. Wellesley does not even come close.

acknowledge, express and analyze one's negative feelings about race is a reluctance to enter into candid and sometimes heated dialogue about matters in which racial hostility is latent. Such dialogue is sometimes replaced by statements or speeches delivered to Academic Council, whose numbers, formality, and procedures diffuse attention to any single line of argument and preclude extended interpersonal dialogue. Other, more appropriate conversational contexts are then rendered ineffective by such dysfunctional strategies as

(1) *Third-party communication (a.k.a. "I'm telling Mom")*. This is a peculiarly Wellesley phenomenon, in which, rather than engage in direct dialogue with a colleague to resolve disagreements or misunderstandings, one resorts to administrative mediation before dialogue has even been attempted. This device is sometimes used by European-American faculty to avoid direct encounters with their minority colleagues, by communicating through administrative intermediaries, often in code or euphemisms. Sometimes these third-party forms of communication are chosen even when a minority faculty member explicitly requests direct dialogue; and are punitive in their effects.

(2) *No-party communication (a.k.a. "I'm not talking")* is another familiar strategy used for avoiding potentially loaded encounters, and loaded encounters with minority faculty in particular. Here the minority individual is simply isolated from communication. This often has the effect of cutting off minority faculty from needed information about departmental or College-wide matters of importance, such as meetings scheduled or group decisions.

(3) *Face-saving communication (a.k.a. "Who, me?")*: In this strategy, the pretense is actively and deliberately maintained that there is nothing to discuss or do because no one has behaved in a questionable or hurtful manner. Since the perpetrator refuses to actively acknowledge responsibility for causing harm, the onus of mounting the accusation falls on the victim, who is then manipulated into the role of "picking a fight" in order to initiate dialogue at all. Being put in this position is particularly stressful and disorienting for minorities since it effectively stigmatizes such individuals not only for being different and "difficult", but for being crazy: for seeing harm that no one else seems to notice, or for taking offense where none is purportedly intended, or for creating a problem that no one else seems to have. This puts minority individuals in the untenable position of having to choose between colluding with the pretense and so undermining their own connection with the reality of racism, dissenting from the pretense and so inviting censure for making trouble, or not interacting with their European-American colleagues at all.

There are other strategies for avoiding racially tinged conflict with minorities at Wellesley. The European-American avoidance of first-personal mutual engagement with minority colleagues, and a fortiori mutual engagement over racial difference and personal reactions to it, makes it extremely difficult to cultivate authentic interethnic friendships of trust and mutual self-disclosure,

therefore impossible to examine those personal reactions, therefore impossible to educate oneself about race, and so impossible to educate others about it. It creates a climate in which minority faculty, staff and students are made to feel either that their personal narratives of discrimination and repression are unwelcome as contributions to interpersonal discourse; or else that they are being put on the spot and mined for information about "authentic" minority experience that European-American practices at Wellesley have made it impossible to find anywhere else (see II.A.1.c, and IV.A, above).

This then produces the painful public spectacle in various official group contexts in which a minority individual may reach such a boiling point of exasperation that they then recount such an experience with very strong emotion, regardless of the consequences - only to elicit the European-American response, "How do we know this is true? We need more information on this! Is this just one individual's oversensitivity? Where's the information that shows this to be a general trend? Etc." - when in fact it is precisely the traditional Wellesley habits of repression of free and candid discussion, stigmatization of difference (IV.D-F), social inauthenticity (IV.H) and conflict-aversion that create this dearth of information. No individual feels safe in recounting instances of personal humiliation and pain when their experiences are greeted with skepticism, disparagement, suspicions of bad faith or pathology, or demands for even greater self-revelation; and no one should have to justify, defend, or "prove" their experience to anyone else. Minorities naturally resist the risks and dangers of self-exposure under such circumstances. Thus this demand for "more information" merely increases the reluctance of minorities to providing it. There are many such experiences of personal humiliation and pain that are common knowledge within a particular minority community that no member of it feels safe sharing with their European-American colleagues. Thus the institution's refusal to confront and personally engage the harsh realities and complexities of racial difference creates an environment hostile to the exchange of information across racial lines. This, in turn, has as its most deleterious consequence the institutional enforcement of a willed, disingenuous ignorance that disempowers its students, its European-American faculty, and the wider Wellesley community as well.

However, these pathological practices of conformity, repression and stigmatization of difference, and conflict-avoidance have consequences far beyond the perpetuation of racism. They strike at the very heart of what a liberal arts education is intended to accomplish. One of the goals of such an education is to encourage students to form, express, and evaluate their own views, in the context of open discussion and debate with both classmates and faculty. These pathological practices directly obstruct the achievement of this goal and cheat students out of one of the most valuable elements of their college experience. Deprived of this experience, yet presented with public verbal allegiance to the values of free, open and self-reflective debate, many students come away believing that what they have learned at Wellesley is what free, open and self-reflective debate is all about - when in fact they have been taught to regard

public disagreement as bad manners, open debate among conflicting views as an expression of enmity or aggression, and self-censorship as normal. Those who then return to Wellesley in a professional capacity with these teachings intact then are in a position to transmit them to new generations of students.

(J) *The marginalization of anti-racist initiatives.* A further reality that contradicts the façade Wellesley presents to the outside world is that, although Wellesley values racial and ethnic integration, it does not *centrally* value racial and ethnic integration. This is evident if we look not at what Wellesley says but at what it does.

(1) *The reluctance to put anti-racist faculty initiatives at the forefront of Wellesley's administrative agenda* (see II.B.2: The marginalization of anti-racist initiatives; and F.1: A personal anecdote, above). At this time, Wellesley's three (!) anti-racism committees - CARD, MRHR, and AHWGRD - are functioning to contain and ventilate minority dissatisfaction. None has the administrative clout to implement any of its own recommendations, nor is it likely to receive such empowerment in the near future. The appointment of a new anti-racism committee custom-made for each new racist incident functions as an assertive and concerned symbolic gesture that diverts public attention from - and also increases - the administrative impotence and ineffectuality of the old ones.

(2) *Improvisatory gestural damage-control.* A number of late summers ago, after a particularly stressful and unpleasant year for African-American students, black faculty were invited, forty-eight hours before the event, to a meeting of very senior staff in order to offer suggestions on how the administration might avoid a repetition of the preceding year. Since they had been given no advance notification of the meeting - nor, even in the invitations, any indication of its purpose, no one had had the chance to prepare substantive suggestions. Conversation was polite, desultory, and off the top of one's head. The meeting was terminated promptly after two hours. Black faculty were thanked for their input, and there was no follow-up of any kind.

(3) *Desultory follow-through.* But Wellesley's marginalization of anti-racist initiatives can be seen as well in its treatment of both minority students and minority faculty, which is similar in key respects. The AHWGRD notes the College's failure to devote adequate attention and resources to the task of educating students as to how to live together in a multiracial and multiethnic environment (pp. 3-4). It has been suggested (I., above) that this would require similarly educating its administration and staff first. But a similar point could be made about the College's neglect of the education of its European-American faculty in this regard. The result is that minority students and faculty complain in unison that the appearance Wellesley presents in the recruitment phase (to which, in accordance with the pathology of elitist white heterosexual American women's culture [III.B. 1-2], a great deal of attention and resources are devoted) is contradicted by the unpleasant reality of the minority experience - and the

College's neglect thereof - once one enters the community. As one minority faculty member put it, "Wellesley puts all of its energy into flirting. Once they land you, you're no longer attractive, so they drop you and take off the make-up."¹⁶ That is, the perception is that joining the Wellesley community detracts from the stature of the individual rather than conferring greater stature on the institution. This behavior expresses the latent sense of inferiority of traditional elitist white heterosexual American women's culture (III.B.5) in the form of a variant on the Woody Allen syndrome, in which Wellesley loses respect for anyone who chooses to join its club.

Earlier it was suggested (III.D) that even if Wellesley wanted to back up its public pronouncements with substantive implementation, its concern for its fiscal wellbeing would make this very difficult. But the reason Wellesley's fiscal wellbeing would be threatened by more substantial and central attention to the quality of the minority experience both for students and for faculty is because traditional women's culture in general, and traditional elitist white heterosexual American women's culture more specifically, does not, in fact, centrally value the integration of difference its minority population represents (III.A.1-2).

(K) Political perfectionism. The reality of Wellesley's deeply unhealthy and typically American racial attitudes is difficult enough for this community to confront. What II.C demonstrates is the *justified aversion* many European-American faculty feel at doing this individually in a public or semi-public context. This aversion is justified because the pathological characteristics of elitist white heterosexual American women's culture enumerated earlier (III.B.1-6) constitute a culture of shame rather than a culture of guilt.

Briefly, a guilt culture sets an ideal of right action, such that one violates this ideal by *doing* wrong, without thereby *being* wrong. Wrongdoing elicits public censure directed at the agent specifically for the wrong done, not for simply being that agent. A guilt culture is based on a conception of the person as morally responsible for all her actions, right as well as wrong. An agent guilty of wrongdoing can restore her public standing as a morally responsible person through apology, amends, atonement, punishment, or otherwise restoring the balance of justice.

By contrast, a shame culture is one that sets an unattainable ideal of personhood, such that violation of the ideal reveals an individual as inherently defective. In this case wrongdoing reveals the agent herself - not merely her action - as unworthy, debased, or flawed, and elicits public ridicule and humiliation directed against her. Since any admission of wrongdoing merely advertises her unworthiness more blatantly and so elicits more shame, there is nothing the agent can do to restore her public moral standing except to try harder to become perfect. But since the perfect ideal of a shame culture is a public one, its measure of perfection is comparative. One's degree of perfection

¹⁶Data such as these motivate the MRHR's current focus on the retention of minority faculty.

is calibrated against the imperfections of others, and enhanced by their debasement. Thus a shame culture motivates the public shaming of anyone unwise enough to reveal their imperfections, and so the vigilant concealment and denial of any such imperfections.

Wellesley's shame culture, rooted in pathological characteristics of traditional elitist white heterosexual American women's culture (III.B.1-2, 5-6), does indeed make the candid admission and analysis of individual racism functionally equivalent to "breaking down" or "confessing sin" - i.e. to a revelation of imperfection that is more likely to elicit public humiliation than absolution, understanding, or acceptance. This is the underlying fear expressed in the concern with the consequences of owning one's own racism noted earlier (II.C.1.c). The fears that such self-ascriptions of responsibility might cause analysis to be stifled, confession for its own sake to be promoted, institutional behavior to be neglected, attempts to combat racism to be discouraged, or distinctions among degrees of racism to be overlooked amount to a fear that publicly owning one's own racism will provoke irrational and harmful reactions from the community. In a shame culture this is not an unrealistic fear. That most European-American faculty would be averse to risking this degree of vulnerability under these circumstances is neither surprising nor irrational.

(V) What III. Neither Says nor Implies:

The foregoing analysis neither says nor implies that Wellesley students are not ambitious or self-assertive. It does not say or imply that they do not seek power, public visibility, or self-fulfillment. Though this analysis seeks to explain phenomena reported primarily by students in the TFRR and AHWGRD, it does not regard these phenomena as by any means confined to students, and its primary focus is not Wellesley students at all. However, this analysis does suggest that, like everyone else in the Wellesley community, Wellesley students pay a price for pursuing these goals in a manner that violates Wellesley's deeply entrenched conventions of behavior. Similarly, this analysis does not say or imply that only women at Wellesley are affected by these pathologies of traditional elitist white heterosexual American women's culture. They generate norms and conventions of behavior that affect everyone to different degrees: *All of us, regardless of race, ethnicity, class background, gender, or sexual preference* are here because we were perceived to satisfy Wellesley's traditional elitist white heterosexual American women's criteria of behavior, self-presentation, and personal values.

On the other hand, this analysis neither says nor implies that everyone thus affected is a victim. Conversations with individuals on this campus over the past seven years have revealed many resources and strategies particular individuals have developed to combat Wellesley's repressive, homogenizing, and marginalizing tendencies. These include passive resistance, active resistance, drawing a sharp distinction between public façade and private

behavior, opportunistic exploitation of Wellesley's neglect of individuality, maintaining strong boundaries between work and home life, carving out secret fortresses of privacy, residing at a great distance, and finding personal fulfillment in activities external to the institution, to name just a few.

(VI) This Document Itself as an Experimental Test of the Theory:

There is a great deal of value in Wellesley's culture (presumably that is why we are all here) that is irrelevant to issues of minority retention, and therefore is not mentioned in this analysis. Instead, it calls attention to severe problems and disturbing and unpleasant facts about the Wellesley social environment. It does not assign personal intention or individual responsibility for the pathology of elitist white heterosexual American women's culture, or for the particular form this takes at Wellesley, since these matters are clearly outside the conscious control of individuals. On the other hand, it does not absolve individuals of personal responsibility for contributing to this pathology by explaining away Wellesley's racism as the accidental by-product of good intentions, even though these are very much in evidence. It does argue that the racial attitudes that pervade and shape the Wellesley environment are deeply rooted and fundamentally unhealthy: not good, not justifiable, and certainly not perfect; and that it is not likely that these attitudes will change radically within the foreseeable future. To a perfectionist and conformist culture governed by an intense and centrally definitive elitist dedication to serving others, these must be very difficult and painful criticisms to countenance.

To what extent, then, can we expect this analysis itself to be absorbed in the familiar ways - that is, in conformity with the pathological styles associated with traditional elitist white heterosexual American women's culture? To what extent can we expect it to be greeted as a disruptive and intolerable expression of difference and self-assertion that offends against Wellesley's conventions of repressiveness, conformity and nonconfrontation, offends against its perfectionism, denial, and naiveté, subverts its focus on public appearance over social reality, and so exacerbates its sense of inadequacy and inferiority? To what extent, consequently, can we expect it to be the target of disapproval rather than discussion, repression and retaliation rather than reflection, silencing rather than self-examination, and amnesia rather than action?

Alternately, to what extent might this analysis provide a convenient distancing device that enables Wellesley's culture to see itself from a different perspective and begin to take steps to heal its pathology?

The TFRR expresses the ambition "to move Wellesley to become a community where difference is acknowledged and prized, where racial perspectives are valued, and where disagreement, criticism, and opposition are celebrated rather than suppressed and shunned." (p. 6). How far away is Wellesley from achieving this goal?

VII. Containment: Ameliorative Measures Implied by the Foregoing Analysis:

The subtitle of this analysis expresses the conviction that Wellesley's racism goes as deep as the racism of American society more generally, and so is not susceptible to eradication. The foregoing discussion does, however, suggest some ways in which Wellesley's racism can be contained so as to make the environment more tolerable for its minority students, faculty and staff. These suggestions are divided into (A) Individualization, (B) Empowerment, and (C) Education. This linear order reflects the temporal order in which these suggestions should be implemented.

(A) Individualization. Before Wellesley's predominantly European-American community can determine specifically how to make Wellesley a better place for itself as well its minority faculty, students and staff, it needs an empirical, inductive base of concrete experience of racial, ethnic and cultural difference and individuality. This report has described some of the ways in which it is now possible to avoid that experience at Wellesley. Since many European-American faculty, students and staff also avoid it by living in segregated neighborhoods, the first order of business must be the "immersion experience" of regular and repeated exposure to racial, ethnic, and cultural integration in the workplace.

(1) Obtain funding for the second five Target of Opportunity hires recommended by the TFRR at the senior level. Once there are no easy administrative devices for getting rid of individuals whose unfamiliar personal, cultural, racial or ethnic styles make European-American faculty uncomfortable, the continuing presence of such individuals will enable Wellesley's European-American faculty to learn to live with them - and, eventually, become comfortable with them.

(2) Open recruitment and hiring to senior faculty tenured elsewhere more generally. European-American Wellesley faculty who have been keeping their own, highly developed individuality and difference under wraps in order to avoid censure (and there are many of them) will take heart in expressing and asserting their own individuality from individuals of similar ethnic and racial backgrounds who, because they come full-grown from other, less repressive institutions, do not realize there is anything that needs to be repressed.

(3) Question and violate the norm of preferential hiring for Wellesley alumnae in staff and administrative positions. By encouraging individuals from other backgrounds and educational environments to join the Wellesley community in a variety of professional capacities, both present and future generations of Wellesley alumnae will benefit from exposure to a broader spectrum of people than the Wellesley environment now provides.

(4) *Abolish classroom visitation of junior faculty.* Require of all junior faculty regular consultation with Wellesley's Learning and Teaching Center, and encourage self-monitoring strategies such as media equipment that allows junior faculty to videotape their own classroom performance for later review and evaluation by LTC staff (these are strategies that have been used successfully at the Harvard Business School and the Georgetown University Law School). Make satisfaction of these requirements, rather than the substantive evaluations by LTC staff, a necessary condition of obtaining tenure.

(5) *Decentralize back to professionally and interpersonally functional academic departments most of the CFA's power to reappoint, tenure, promote and financially reward faculty.* Using external departmental reviews as a guide, select those departments that are demonstrably capable of autonomous functioning, and empower them to do so with regard to reappointment, tenure, promotion, and merit increases. Reconstitute the composition of the CFA by requiring that at least three of the eight voting members of the committee be persons of color. Then give to the CFA the power to monitor a department's progress toward integration goals in its reappointment and tenure decisions, and to reverse those which interfere with it. Either create an appeals board where questionable CFA decisions can be reversed, or assign that authority to the President of the College.

(6) *Revise faculty merit review criteria.* Each department should establish a 15-point (say) system of evaluation of teaching, research, and service that permits point trade-offs among all categories, such that someone who excels at service, is a below-average teacher, and devotes no energy to research might receive a merit weighting of, say, 11, 3, and 0 respectively, for a merit increase of 14 out of 15 possible points. And similarly for other unequal distributions of talent and energy.

(B) *Empowerment.* In order to learn from racially and ethnically different others how to make Wellesley a better environment for such individuals, the Wellesley administration needs to be willing to share some of its power and authority with minority individuals who are thereby empowered to speak clearly and candidly about what needs to be done, and to implement those policy recommendations in action. The administration needs to put in place structural safeguards that will enable it to defer to minority expertise on matters centrally affecting Wellesley's minority community.

(1) *Educate the trustees as to the significance, implications, and deleterious consequences of their unusual micromanagement of Wellesley's administrative affairs.* Convince them to take the risk of trusting Wellesley's highly competent senior administrative staff with the autonomy and independence to guide Wellesley to even greater institutional achievement.

(2) *Hire and/or promote more minorities to senior staff positions.* Wellesley has made a wise start in promoting a minority person to the role of

College Ombudsman. But there is more that needs to be done at a time when Smith already has had an African-American woman president for several years. Other key senior staff positions at Wellesley might similarly benefit from minority expertise.

(3) *Invite union staff representation on all faculty committees.* The assumption that support staff and service personnel have no interest in these matters and nothing of importance to contribute to them is badly misguided.

(4) *Empower Wellesley's anti-racism committees to make and implement policy recommendations.* For example, CARD might be empowered to recommend particular minority candidates to open student or staff positions, and even the creation of new positions where the need for these can be defended. MRHR should be given a budget and administrative support sufficient to undertake the collection and analysis of any data relevant to minority faculty recruitment, hiring and retention it decides it needs. The resulting longitudinal study of minority faculty retention should be distributed to all Wellesley faculty and senior staff along with the annual College catalogue. Its results should be annually updated with a questionnaire *of the sort that is now given to minority students on an annual basis.* The MRHR should also be empowered to represent the interests of minority faculty to the College when appropriate, including situations in which the need for some form of mediation or adjudication is indicated.

(5) *Wellesley's anti-racism committees must form alliances to fight for the implementation of targeted policy initiatives.* The proliferation of anti-racism committees has been analyzed in this report as a handicap. But it is also a potential source of strength. MRHR, CARD, AHWGRD, and the Black Task Force conjointly represent a sizable number of concerned and progressive Wellesley faculty and staff. They should draw up a list of suggested anti-racism initiatives (such as, *inter alia*, those suggested in this section), distribute them to all members of these committees, and ask each to select that single initiative she or he believes to be most urgent. Target that initiative chosen by the majority, and form strategic alliances among committees and other sympathetic groups on campus for promoting it. Be prepared to exert public pressure, since sympathetic senior staff and administration who can demonstrate to the trustees the force of community opinion can make a stronger case for the urgency of implementation. Once that initiative has been successfully achieved, reconstruct the list and again poll all committee members. Repeat the process for each anti-racism initiative on the list. By mutually agreeing on what specific initiative is most pressing, uniting their resources, and dividing their labor accordingly, Wellesley's three anti-racism committees together can, in fact, accomplish a significant amount.

(C) *Education.* Implementation of the measures recommended in A and B are sure to raise problems, conflicts, and questions in the minds of European-American faculty for whom the experience of racial, ethnic and cultural

integration is unfamiliar and uncomfortable. The College can play an important role in educating such individuals and accustoming them to this experience.

(1) Hold and substantially fund periodic, small-scale retreats for faculty, administrative staff, and union management, conducted by competent professionals, that include educational films, readings, workshops, and discussion groups on racial and ethnic difference. Pay participants lavishly to attend these retreats, so that the decision to do so can be represented as a need to earn more rather than the (potentially shaming) admission of a need to learn more.

(2) Reward European-American honesty, humility, and sincere inquiry with patience and appreciation. This is something Wellesley's minority community needs to contribute to this process, even if the questions asked are naive, elementary, or invasive. Being willing to educate the white community on matters of racial difference is part of the tradeoff of being at a high-calibre mainstream institution with Wellesley's resources. Minority faculty and staff should not be among the ones to shame or ridicule European-Americans for admitting ignorance, insecurity, or anxiety about racial matters. Instead minority faculty and staff should offer their European-American colleagues the opportunity to demonstrate some nobility of character by naming, analyzing, and monitoring their own racism.

(3) A corollary to (2) would be: Punish European-American arrogance with impatience and dismissal. Send the message that it is praiseworthy to admit ignorance or imperfection, and blameworthy to assume knowledge, familiarity, or political perfection. Make it easy for European-Americans to abdicate - at least temporarily - a social and political upper hand that is strangling everyone. They, too, have suffered *very* serious deprivations because of segregation, and should not be blamed, shamed or patronized for not knowing what they never had the opportunity to learn. Minority faculty and staff can make it harder for European-Americans to learn what they need to know, by punishing their questions with anger and invective, and thereby encouraging them to maintain the pathetic façade of impregnable omniscience. Or minority faculty and staff can make it easier, by being willing to share their knowledge and experience in a friendly atmosphere, not of tolerance, but of *acceptance*.