



LYRICAL ADVICE TO FUTURE FELLOWS TIM CARO

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I convened a group of scientists who study different aspects of animal colouration. During the year, we profited from many interesting conversations over lunches and at the Floh at Grunewald S-Bahn station. We ran a single enjoyable large workshop from which we expect to publish a 20-chapter special journal edition and review article on many aspects of animal colouration. This was a very productive year for me, and I can provide some advice for future Fellows who want to make the most out of their stay at the Wissenschaftskolleg.

When one first arrives and meets about 40 new Fellows from all walks of academia, it is inspiring, interesting and a little daunting. A realization quickly sets in that one knows rather little about other disciplines and even one's own. Sam Cooke's (1960) song springs to mind.

Don't know much about history
Don't know much about biology
Don't know much about a science book
Don't know much about the French I took

But Wiko is a wonderful place in which to work, and after long hours reading and writing, lunchtime breaks with colleagues often lead to discussion as to what one is working on, and it soon dawns upon you that everyone has an opinion – about even your own work! There are so many ways of viewing the world intellectually:

It's a restless hungry feeling
That don't mean no one no good
When ev'rything I'm a-sayin'
You can say it just as good
You're right from your side
I'm right from mine
We're both just one too many mornings
An' a thousand miles behind

(Bob Dylan 1964)

And as time goes on you realize you are changing intellectually – just a little, in that you are willing to consider other people's perspectives, points of view you may not have known existed:

You've been with the professors
And they've all liked your looks
With great lawyers you have
Discussed lepers and crooks
You've been through all of
F. Scott Fitzgerald's books
You're very well read
It's well known.

But something is happening here
And you don't know what it is
Do you, Mister Jones?

(Bob Dylan 1965)

But whatever you do, don't work all the time, and do get out of Wiko into real Berlin.
There are other things to do (I played squash – a lot):

Hey what else can we do now?
Except roll down the window
And let the wind blow
Back your hair
Well the night's busting open
These two lanes will take us anywhere
We got one last chance to make it real
To trade in these wings on some wheels
Climb in back
Heaven's waiting on down the tracks
Oh-oh, come take my hand
We're riding out tonight to case the promised land
Oh-oh Thunder Road oh Thunder Road
Lying out there like a killer in the sun
Hey I know it's late, we can make it if we run
Oh Thunder Road sit tight take hold
Thunder Road

(Bruce Springsteen 1975)

Then it is all over far too soon, and as the thought of returning to one's own institution after a year looms ever larger, one realizes that things have moved on, back at your university, and you certainly won't be as well looked after there as you have been at Wiko:

You don't know what's going on
You've been away for far too long

You can't come back and think you are still mine
You're out of touch, my baby
My poor discarded baby
I said, baby, baby, baby, you're out of time
Well, baby, baby, baby, you're out of time
I said, baby, baby, baby, you're out of time
You are all left out
Out of there without a doubt
Cause baby, baby, baby, you're out of time
(Mick Jagger and Keith Richards 1966).

As for my own situation, I can only extend an invitation to the friends that I made at Wiko:

Welcome to the Hotel California
Such a lovely place (such a lovely place)
Such a lovely face
They're livin' it up at the Hotel California
What a nice surprise (what a nice surprise)
Bring your alibis

(Don Felder, Don Henley and Glenn Frey 1977).

Lyrics aside, I am most grateful for the opportunity to talk hard science with colleagues whom I would normally only meet briefly at conferences, to make new friendships, and to live in a wonderful city.