



THE EVOLUTION OF BEAUTY

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I was a rather late addition to the Animal Coloration Focus Group at Wiko this year. But I was gratified that the working group organizer, Tim Caro, eagerly supported my last-minute application and that my application was accepted by Wiko. Unfortunately, I was only able to come for the Fall semester, but I was happy to start with German classes in mid-August. Ursula Kohler was an excellent language instructor and marvelous at introducing the class to German culture.

The Animal Coloration Focus Group was as intellectually diverse as the challenge that brought us together. I very much enjoyed our many discussions at Wiko and at the “Floh”. Happily, I was able to return to Wiko in May to participate in a conference sponsored by the Focus Group, which brought together a few dozen colleagues from around the world to discuss the trends in and challenges to our field. I think the collected papers from the conference to be submitted to the *Philosophical Transactions of the Linnean Society* will be a landmark for our discipline.

In addition to the delightful interactions with my scientific colleagues in the Animal Coloration group, my semester at Wiko provided me with an excellent opportunity to complete an ongoing book project on *The Evolution of Beauty*. My life at Wiko was a marvelous mix of monastic intellectual isolation punctuated by marvelous conversations, food, wine, and music! The mix was perfect for me, and I was able to complete the final revisions of my book and to submit it my publisher, Doubleday, in early January. The book will be published by Doubleday in May 2017.

At Yale, I have been fortunate enough to be a fellow at the Whitney Humanities Center, where I play the role of the token scientist. Our luncheon colloquia are my “liberal arts” moment of the week. My interactions at the Whitney were an excellent template for my time at Wiko. The diversity of intellectual viewpoints and approaches, the open conversations, and the shared critical insights were always stimulating, encouraging, and rewarding to me. I was especially gratified by the openness of my humanist colleagues at Wiko to engage with new perspectives from the natural sciences and to teach me more about their disciplines and world views.

Of course, some of my most vivid memories of my semester at Wiko are of musical performances in the city of Berlin, of new friends, and of late evening gatherings after Thursday dinners! For these many opportunities and memories, I remain really grateful.