

MUSEUM OF COMPARATIVE ZOOLOGY

The Agassiz Museum

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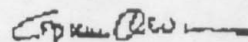
27 May 1997

~~Batz~~Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V.
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53757 Sankt AugustinDear ~~Batz~~: **BATUZ**

I apologize for not responding sooner, as promised, to the request for a statement to use at the Cadenabbia Conference. Here it is:

I applaud the conception of the Société Imaginaire, and am in accord with its vision of the need for communication among the diverse cultures of the world. I believe that the most effective way to accomplish this worthy mission is through the natural sciences, drawing strength from the consilience of causal explanations already routine among their disciplines and linking them in a systematic way to criticism of the arts. Creativity in the arts is not a random process that occurs independently in the minds of the innovators. It is driven by certain impulses and aesthetic biases in the brain that the natural sciences can help to understand. For example, phenomena as diverse as the evolution of Chinese *karayo* script and of Mondrian's abstractions can be explained in part as the convergence in the degree of figure complexity that is maximally existing to the brain. The excitation is biological and can be measured in electroencephalogram recordings. Experiments with composite and computer-enhanced photographs have similarly revealed an innate set of criteria for female facial beauty. The great archetypes of literary narrative may have a similar inborn biological origin. The creative arts are free-ranging, to be sure, but the analysis of it in analytic criticism can be greatly strengthened—and united—by linkage of new findings in the natural sciences.

With best wishes,



Edward O. Wilson

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