

CHARLES DARWIN: HISTORY'S MOST FAMOUS NATURALIST

Dear Sir,

I would like to commend you for the brief essay about Charles Darwin that was published in the July 2005 issue of the Singapore Medical Journal⁽¹⁾. This July was the 80th anniversary of the Scopes “Monkey” Trial in the United States and after so much time, debate continues to swirl around Darwinism and what it tells us about ourselves. That some find the theory of evolution, the linchpin of biological thought, threatening, is a testament to its potent (yet sometimes disturbing) explanatory power.

Drs Tan and Luu did a masterful job of distilling a complex life and theory into a succinct essay⁽¹⁾. Having read much by and about Darwin, I must say that I am not sure that I have read a better brief outline of his life and work. Especially noteworthy was the authors highlighting the often-overlooked fact that Darwin considered himself a geologist, and that the study of geology critically formed the development of his theories regarding species.

Thank you for publishing this piece, and at such an appropriate time. Professor SY Tan’s “Medicine in Stamps” series is a joy to read and serves to remind us that our pursuit of medicine should rightly be seen in a broad societal, artistic and historical context.

Yours sincerely,

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REFERENCE

1. Tan SY, Luu VT. Charles Darwin (1809-1882): history’s most famous naturalist. Singapore Med J 2005; 46:320-1.