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E-Letter responses to:

review:

Peter J. Bowler

Darwin's Originality

Science 2009; 323: 223-226 [[Abstract](#)]

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PUBLISHED E-LETTER RESPONSES:

▼ Erasmus Darwin's Influence on His Grandson Charles

Aldemaro Romero (23 April 2009)

Erasmus Darwin's Influence on His Grandson Charles

23 April 2009

Aldemaro Romero,
Chair and Professor
Department of
Biological Sciences,
Arkansas State
University,
Jonesboro, AR
72467, USA

Respond to this E-Letter:

[Re: Erasmus Darwin's Influence on His Grandson Charles](#)

I was surprised that Erasmus Darwin was not mentioned in P. J. Bowler's otherwise excellent article on Charles Darwin's ideas ("Darwin's originality," Review, 9 January 2009, p. 223). Although Charles Darwin's synthetic and insightful mind led him to revolutionize the way we see nature, we should not forget the influence that his grandfather Erasmus had on him. When one reads Erasmus's *Zoönomia* (1794-1796) it is clear that he anticipated many of the main ideas that were later masterfully and abundantly substantiated by Charles. Charles was always very circumspect about the intellectual influence that his grandfather had on him; he said only that his grandfather had anticipated the erroneous ideas of Lamarck, despite the fact that Darwin followed mostly Lamarckian ideas when it came to explaining the rudimentation or loss of organs among many organisms, particularly cavernicolous ones (1). This lack of acknowledgment may have been because, as Darlington put it, Charles wanted to distance himself from the most controversial writers on the topic that preceded him (2).

Aldemaro Romero

Department of Biological Sciences, Arkansas State University, Jonesboro, AR 72467, USA.

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1. A. Romero, *Forum Public Pol.* 2, 867 (2007).
2. C. D. Darlington, *Sci. Am.* 200, 60 (1959).

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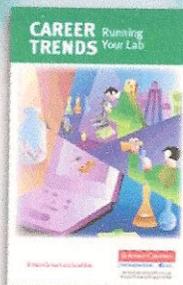


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