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Three historians of science are unhappy about their treatment in a creationist movie about Darwin, as they [explain](#) [4] in a note in the July 2009 *Newsletter of the History of Science Society*. Peter Bowler, Janet Browne, and Sandra Herbert write, "We have recently been featured in a documentary film, 'The Voyage that Shook the World,' produced by Fathom Media of Australia and directed by Stephen Murray of Synergy Films, New Zealand. We were led to believe that the movie was being made to be shown as an educational film on Australian broadcast television and possibly elsewhere. Fathom Media was revealed to be a subsidiary of Creation Ministries International when publicity for the movie began to appear on the internet."

Previously, William Crawley, a blogger for the BBC, [reported](#) [5] (June 21, 2009) that Bowler was "unhappy to be appearing in what he regards as an 'anti-Darwinian' film which offers an historically distorted portrait of Darwin" and that he along with Browne and Herbert "only discovered that they had inadvertently contributed to a Creationist film a month before the film's release." Phil Bell, the CEO of Creationist Ministries UK, acknowledged that Fathom Media was established as a front company, explaining, "At the end of the day ... [when] people see 'Creationist', instantly the shutters go up and that would have shut us off from talking to the sort of experts, such as Professor Bowler, that we wanted to get to."

Crawley added, "I asked Phil Bell if this method of securing an interview was 'deceptive'. He said: 'Well, it could be called deceptive. But I think, at the end of the day, I would say that more people are concerned about how we've made a documentary, that's a world-class documentary, clearly with wonderful footage, with excellent interviews, and balanced open discussion.'" A subsequent statement, posted on CMI's website on June 27, 2009, [amplified](#) [6]: "We were and are under an obligation to speak the truth, but not to provide exhaustive information where it was not sought," adding, "Further, and perhaps most

importantly, we were determined to deal fairly with the material that the interviewees provided."

The interviewees themselves, however, were not satisfied with the fairness of the movie, writing, "Janet Browne's remarks about his childhood delight in making up stories to impress people is used to imply that the same motive may have driven his scientific thinking. Peter Bowler's description of Darwin's later views on racial inequality is used in the film, but not Bowler's account of Adrian Desmond and James Moore's thesis [in [Darwin's Sacred Cause](#) [7]] that Darwin was inspired by his opposition to racism and slavery. Sandra Herbert's comment that Darwin's theory required explanation of many aspects of life was edited down to imply that his theory required explanation of all aspects of life."

Bowler, Browne, and Herbert ended their article by musing, "Academics perhaps do need to be more aware of the fact that the media organizations are not always open about their underlying agendas." (The similar case of [Expelled](#) [8] springs to mind.) "Had we known the true origins of Fathom Media," they continued, "we probably would not have contributed, but the producers do have a point: if academic historians refuse to participate when movements they don't approve of seek historical information, these historians can hardly complain if less reputable sources are used instead." They accordingly recommended a few websites for information on the history of Darwin and evolution, including NCSE's.

So far, *The Voyage that Shook the World* seems to have attracted little attention independently of the controversy over its misleading the historians: no reviews of it appear at Rotten Tomatoes or Metacritic. The sole positive review cited at CMI's website is from Ted Baehr on Movieguide, which, despite its neutral name, describes itself as a ministry "dedicated to redeeming the values of the mass media according to biblical principles, by influencing entertainment industry executives and helping families make wise media choices"; Baehr also gave four stars to *Expelled*. There are no signs that the movie is going to have a theatrical release in the United States.

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[6] <http://creation.com/the-voyage-darwin-film-defended>

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