

Arnold Wesker wrote this work from his experiences observing the journalists of Britain's SUNDAY TIMES. Although this production has been "Americanized" so as to prevent national idiosyncrasies from obscuring Wesker's basic points, there are a few ironies surrounding the work that the audience may find interesting.

The first is that both the SUNDAY TIMES and its sister paper THE TIMES, are no longer being published. Since November 30th, 1978, they have been embroiled in an industrial dispute with their printing union which has prevented the paper from appearing on the streets. So while we are being entertained by these characters, their real life counterparts are facing a decidedly uncertain future and with little prospect of a resolution.

The second, and probably the more fascinating irony, is that although the paper's reputation was based on its superior investigative reporting (the International Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg recently found in the paper's favour against the British Government over the reporting of the tragic Thalidomide case), these very same journalists sought to suppress Wesker's work.

The essence of the problem was that the tightly-knit circle of people who make up London's Fleet Street found Wesker's characters very thinly disguised indeed. Everyone knew who everyone was meant to be (and if they didn't it was very quickly pointed out to them!). So although Wesker knew when he was putting fictitious sentiments into factual characters' mouths, the habitués of El Vino's didn't. The SUNDAY TIMES' journalists found themselves being identified with actions and thoughts that were perhaps alien to them. And the more they protested, the more they were disbelieved.

Journalists are among the first to complain when their own methods are used against them. Wesker undoubtedly didn't mean the play to be about the SUNDAY TIMES per se and he would probably object to such a literal interpretation were it applied. Nevertheless, while we watch this play, perhaps we should spare a thought for those who did provide Wesker with the framework of this work; at present they find themselves in the inverted role of that famous ghost ship, The Marie Celeste- whereas that was a ship without a crew, they are currently a crew without a ship.

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