

Uncomfortable Science and Enemies of the People

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Abstract

I had wanted for some time to write an account of Henrik Ibsen's play 'An Enemy of the People'; the narrative of the play uncannily replicates the situation, feelings and social consequences of the case of Dr. Andrew Wakefield. My analysis of the play is hopefully not an academic exercise but an account that provides an insight into the way in which those with vested interests behave and how we might combat them. One of the most important aspects of any comparison between the play and the case of Dr. Wakefield touches on the fact that despite its age and its national circumstances, the message of this play is still clearly germane to contemporary situations. One reason for this is that Ibsen chose not only an environmental toxin as his dramatic spark but also in the play's central character, a medical doctor who moved from clinical observation to a rough form of epidemiology.

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