

## Epigenetics: The Death of the Genetic Theory of Disease Transmission

**Joel Wallach**

**Ma Lan**

**Gerhard Schrauzer**

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*These authors advance a theory of mineral deficiencies, rather than genetics, as cause of diseases.*

Calling upon the research and theories of Dr. Joel Wallach, *Epigenetics* contends that many diseases currently considered genetic in nature, such as Huntington's disease, Tourette's syndrome, and cystic fibrosis, are actually a result of dietary mineral deficiencies. The book, cowritten by Wallach, Dr. Ma Lan, and Gerhard Schrauzer, also discusses ancient alchemy and some occult practices, and references several anecdotes from Wallach's career.

*Epigenetics* dawdles in history for several chapters without making any clear connection to its thesis. When the thesis does appear, it feels like a change in topic. Despite this, the volume is an entertaining read until some of Wallach's minor run-ins with the mainstream medical community are characterized as "witch hunts." At this point, the text begins to counterattack the medical establishment. The remainder of the book reviles negative responses to the theories presented and discusses encounters with several professional establishments and colleagues. The tone is often embattled, offended, and personal.

Wallach has long promoted the concept that mineral deficiencies are the primary cause of disease, a theory that has fueled debate among the mainstream and alternative medical communities for years. This book sticks to that line, specifically ascribing many common ailments and conditions to mineral deficiency.

Unfortunately, the claims offered are not convincing based on the evidence provided. Many of the studies the text cites were conducted by the authors themselves and feature conclusions that are not corroborated by other sectors of the scientific community. These studies are often biased or flawed, as when, in chapter nine, Wallach and Ma Lan conclude from the study of a single rhesus monkey and 1,700 human corpses that cystic fibrosis is caused by selenium deficiency. If symptoms of both of these conditions had appeared in the corpses, then this would have been proof only of correlation, not necessarily causation. The book's credibility would be significantly enhanced by referencing large-scale studies with live subjects and control groups.

Though the authors' expertise is obvious, certain conclusions smack of bias, especially those concerning homosexuality. From chapter one, a passage describes how "congenital events that produced unexplainable confusion like homosexuality, plagued [ancient peoples]." Later, in chapter 17, homosexuality is grouped into the category of genetic diseases, alongside muscular dystrophy and Kawasaki disease, that are the preventable result of "nutritional distress." Lack of research support severely weakens this claim, which is already likely to inspire controversy.

*Epigenetics* seems to be founded not on large-scale studies of populations with genetic illnesses but on the authors' belief in their cause and on their overwhelming sense of unjust persecution by the medical establishment. It's an interesting and sometimes entertaining read.

ANNA CALL (July 15, 2014)

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