

The Battle of Homoeopathic Dilutions



A French Scientist makes a strong case against official science

After a two year investigation, Michel Schiff recently wrote 'The Memory of Water.' This is a readable account of the technical and of the human aspects of the controversy over the scientific status of extreme dilutions. Now available in an updated English version, this report provides documented evidence of attempts to suppress significant biological research. Tony Brand interviews the author.

Can you tell our readers at the BHA something about your personal background? How did you get involved with Benveniste?

I was trained as a physicist and worked in high-energy physics for ten years. I then switched to topics that seemed to me more interesting and more meaningful, like the IQ controversy. That was my first experience with the human aspects of scientific research. Gradually, I realized that the human aspects and the technical aspects of scientific research are intimately connected. As I tried to illustrate in my book, the controversy over the scientific status of extreme dilutions is a perfect example of this intimate connection. This is why I became interested, to the point that I switched from an observer to a participant of the fight.

Some will claim that, though becoming a participant, you suffered from a lack of objectivity.

I have four points to make on this question. First, my initial position was sceptical; it appeared in print, *before* I started my field study. Second, my participation allowed *me* to obtain an inside view which I could not have had otherwise. Third, I disagree with the traditional positivist view of objectivity (as do most sociologists of science today). I think that the crucial issue is not whether one has a preconceived opinion (although how can you avoid this?) but whether one can control it to some extent by being fully aware of it. Last but not least is that, is it not calling the kettle black? Was it really an act of scientific objectivity to come to Benveniste's laboratory with magician and with a physicist specializing in the detection of fraud to analyze

biological experiments.

What impelled you to write the book?

I am paid to do research and to describe it in writing. Initially, I tried to publish my work through the usual professional channels. I soon realized that it would take more time and energy to try to achieve this goal than it had taken me to do the research, with no assurance of finally succeeding. I think that, when faced with censorship of the type I describe and analyse in my book, this is the only realistic possibility. So I decided to write an account that would by-pass the *imprimatur* of the establishment, hence the choice of a non technical editor.

What attracted you initially to the concept of memory of water?

Initially, I was only mildly interested in the phenomenon itself. To me, the affair was just another opportunity to investigate the human aspects of scientific research. It was the testimony of a physicist about previous experiments on the magnetic erasure of the memory of water that challenged my curiosity. This curiosity helped me to find a possible solution to the famous puzzle of the low dispersion of some basophil counts. Far from being a 'proof' of fraud, it is an interesting phenomenon of its own right. This phenomenon is independent of the memory of water: it was described in a publication by other scientists in 1981, seven years before the scandal broke out!

Conventional scientists recognize the anomalous nature of water, so where is the problem?

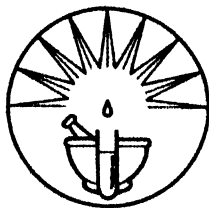
Indeed, conventional scientists will acknowledge the very special properties of water, provided you push them a little, but they refuse to acknowledge that their current models fail to properly account for these properties. The two Italian physicists who have tried to face this problem directly have been censured so far. When you add the additional anomaly of the 'memory of water' as a possible explanation of a mechanism of homoeopathy, you get a satanic verse of science.

Even though it seems clear that water is capable of sustaining information, some will still feel a problem exists since homoeopathic remedies are usually prepared by using alcohol as a solvent, not water.

Yes but most conventional scientists are obsessed not with water but with the absurd idea that high dilution experiments would represent an effect without a cause. Just because no one has yet proposed an explanation that would fit conventional science, they react by saying 'it's impossible, hence it never happened.' Hence the accusations of fraud which I analyse in my book. I did not mention it in my book but alcohol was actually used in some experiments, to study the effect of low frequency fields on the 'memory' of the solvent.

Yet the quantum theory in physics actually implies the existence of energetic links which could account for this phenomenon.

Yes, of course, but in spite of what they claim, scientists do not act and think only according



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to technical knowledge. Most people need mechanistic, reductionist models. How else can we understand the monopoly of molecular genetics in biology? I think that homoeopathy, high dilution experiments and transmission experiments challenge a view of the world inherited from the 19th century, which is particularly inappropriate to living organisms.

You describe transmission experiments in which you participated. What is the link with the memory of water?

Benveniste was so fed up with suspicions that the biological effects which he observed could be due to residual active molecules that, when Attias, a homoeopathic doctor, showed him the instrument he used to transmit homoeopathic products to water, he decided to investigate the phenomenon, using a laboratory set up. Actually, the memory of water is involved in transmission experiments since pure water is activated without any 'chemical' contact with the active product. What is also intolerable to conventional scientists is the idea that chemical activity could be dissociated from its 'material' (ie molecular) support. Like a few other heretics, Benveniste believes that biology of the next century will be largely electromagnetic. He claims that the 'molecular telephone' that he is studying simply mimics processes that occur spontaneously in living cells.

Transmission experiments do not pose any problem to any one familiar with radionics.

The fact is, there are two kinds of science, like two distinct worlds. Benveniste's problems come from the fact that he tried to make a connection between these separate worlds. Charpak, the Nobel physicist who was supposed to act as an expert for the establishment told Benveniste that 'if these transmission experiments are real, this is the greatest scientific discovery since Newton!' (implying, of course that the whole thing is nonsense).

Aren't you somewhat optimistic in hoping that your report could contribute to the change of paradigm?

I try to avoid two pitfalls: 1) a naïve idea that, if you present a good case, people will change

over ...

their mind 2) a cynical view. Both lead to the same result, ie the *status quo*. My strategy has been to appeal to people who have fewer vested interests in the *status quo*, namely the general (educated) public. Time will tell.

Standing back and reflecting upon your association with these studies, what did you personally find the most challenging: high dilution effects, the transmission phenomena or censorship.

Actually randomizing and coding transmission experiments, both Benveniste's imprint on water and Thomas' direct transmission to human neutrophils was quite exciting. But being a direct observer of censorship in action was even more challenging. I think that this experience will be very useful for the research I just started: looking into unconventional approaches to cancer. I have become an expert at distinguishing between the map (current scientific publications) and the territory (natural phenomena). **BHA**

***The Memory of Water: Homoeopathy and the Battle of Ideas in the New Science, Thorsons/Harper Collins £14.99 (Hardback). Available from BHA Enterprises Ltd £16.50 inc p&p.**



BOOKS FOR CHRISTMAS



At last there is a small book explaining the use of homoeopathy for birds. Written by Beryl Chapman who for 15 years worked in a Wild Bird Hospital in Sussex which she founded with her husband. 'Homoeopathy for Birds' is available from BHA Enterprises Ltd by mail order for £5. Beryl Chapman has also just written a novel set in the Lake District which features two families. One human, one swan and homoeopathy comes into it as well. Entitled "Together They Fly" it is available in book shops at £4.99. Barnworks Publishing.

Another book everyone will want for Christmas is:

The Complete Guide to Homoeopathy - The Principles and Practice of Treatment by Dr Andrew Lockie and Dr Nicola Geddes.

It is hard to think of a modern book on homoeopathy as being beautiful *and* practical but Drs Andrew Lockie and Nicola Geddes with their publishers Dorling Kindersley have put together a visually stunning book. The remedies are illustrated with photographs of the basic crude substances, be they of animal, mineral or plant extraction. Of great interest will be the description with apt photographic illustrations of the main constitutional types. The authors have devised a special self assessment questionnaire, based on what a homoeopath might ask at a first consultation. The book covers 150 remedies and has a section devoted to treating common ailments. Available from BHA Enterprises at £21 by mail order. (Hardback only)

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