A Critical Investigation into Precognitive Dreams

A Critical Investigation into Precognitive Dreams:

Dreamscaping without My Timekeeper

By

Paul Kiritsis

Cambridge
Scholars
Publishing

A Critical Investigation into Precognitive Dreams:
Dreamscaping without My Timekeeper

By Paul Kiritsis

This book first published 2020

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Lady Stephenson Library, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2PA, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN (10): 1-5275-4633-0
ISBN (13): 978-1-5275-4633-2

For Jason Ly

You never change things by fighting the existing reality.
To change something, build a new model that
makes the existing model obsolete.

—R. BUCKMINSTER FULLER

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Fig. A-1. A photo of Paul Kiritsis

I am most indebted to my editors, the conscientious Mary Gregerson and James Baron, for their laborious and meticulous work. None of this would have been possible without their eagle eye for constructive criticism and knack for conveying it in a sensitive manner. They have both been phenomenal assets in this next instalment of my development as a writer, researcher, and clinician.

Profound gratitude must also be given to my ever-faithful friends, confidantes, and colleagues, the congenial Francesca Lalli, Jessica Johnson, Cindy Jepsen, Ethan Carr, and Charity Anne Ross—I laud them for their candidness and camaraderie, receptivity to my requests, nonjudgmental attitude, and embodying the likes of unconditional positive regard and love. They are truly exceptional individuals, pearls of pulchritude in the deep cobalt-blue ocean.

Earnest congratulations, also, to all the study participants who were chivalrous enough to explore their personal dreamscapes and stumble upon scintillating shards of the future. Their curiosity is to be celebrated and lauded, not ignored, over-scrutinized, or lampooned.

Without hesitation, I also offer heartfelt thanks to my clients at the Community Institute for Psychotherapy who have taught me so much about the extremes, nuances, and complexities of human behavior. I revel in elation and gratitude as some have been completely forthcoming and transparent in describing their own extraordinary precognitive dreams to me, further vindicating their veridicality.

Finally, I salute Jason Ly for his support and also my beloved family—father, mother, and brother—who are omnipresent in my life and immensely supportive from both an emotional and financial standpoint. Their solicitude knows no bounds.

PREFACE

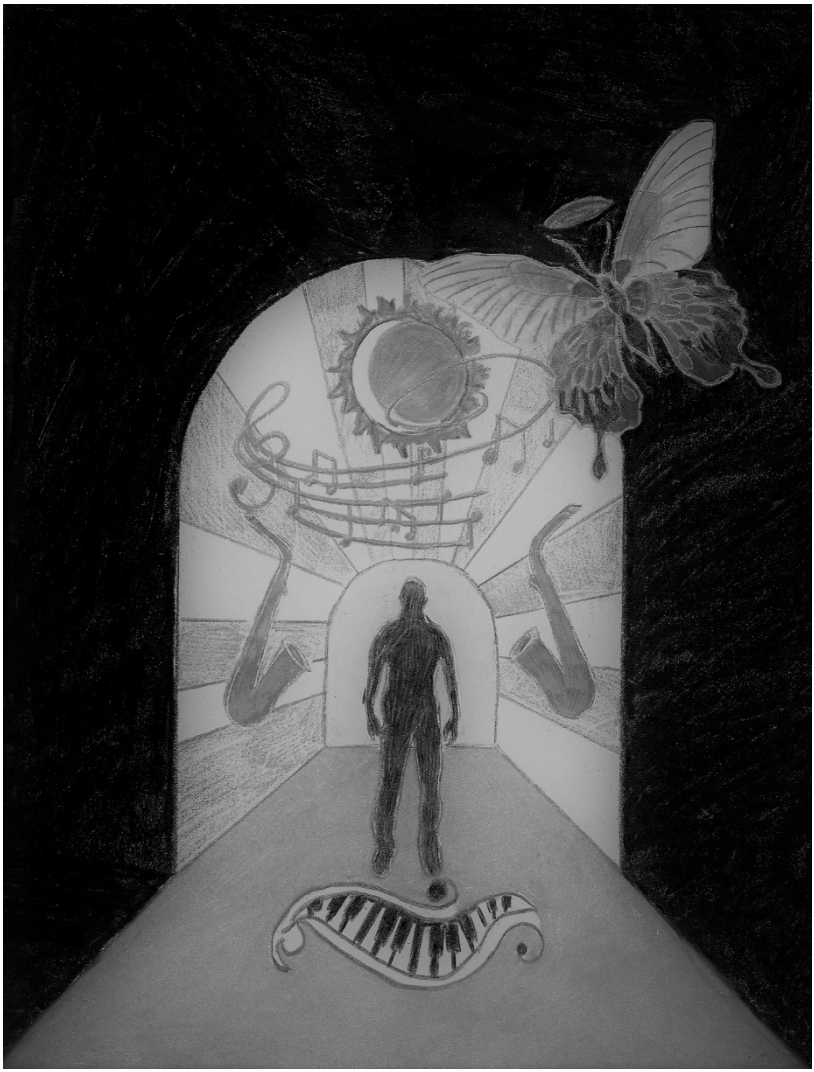

Fig. A-2. A predictive dream about healing through music

The contentious and controversial subject of so-called precognitive dreams has enthralled researchers and laypersons alike. But what exactly do we mean by a precognitive dream? It might be helpful to define the concept. Known as prophetic or predictive dreams in the vernacular, precognitive dreams may be construed as extraordinary mental phenomena that exhibit extrasensory perception. This type of dream is frequently characterized as lucid and vivid, and imbued with "preternatural clarity." Typically, veridical information about persons known to the percipient, self-states, or events that are coming-to-pass manifest within his or her dreamscape, often in clandestine form. What is meant here is that precognitive dream shards are rarely carbon copy or precise simulations of associative waking events; however, the phenomenology between the two is so uncannily similar in content and scope as to imply retrocausality. Contrary to popular belief, they are neither sparse nor confined to self-styled psychics or individuals with clear psychic openings.

The annals of history contain innumerable examples of dream precognition. Unsurprisingly, they are mentioned in the Bible. The most famous is one seen by the Pharaoh: a chronological rendition of seven healthy cows and seven malnourished cows emerging from the Nile waters. Joseph interprets this to mean seven wonderful years of abundance followed by seven miserable years of famine (Genesis 41). In places like ancient Greece people could attend oracular centers in Dodona and Delphi and have their "fate" revealed through the prophetic guttural utterances of priestesses voluntarily channeling specific Olympian deities like Phoebus Apollo.

When people think of prophecy and precognition, the Delphic Oracle immediately comes to mind. Situated at picturesque Delphi in Greece, the Delphic Oracle was the most famous oracle of the ancient world. The prophetic utterances were relayed by a mature age woman called a Pythia; the Pythia would purify herself in the Castalian Spring before mounting a sacred tripod from where she would answer questions by selecting a black pebble for "no" or a white one for "yes." Alternatively, she would enter a hypnotic trance and recite prophetic hexameters. The type of answer and level of detail one received was contingent upon the fee paid. A greater display of generosity towards the oracle amounted to a deeper, more reflective, and more comprehensive answer. Fourth-century Greeks and Romans were of the opinion that the Pythia entered a heightened state of consciousness by inhaling hallucinogenic gases, but geologists who have examined the surrounding area have never found fissures or chasms to substantiate such claims.

Emmanuel Swedenborg (1688–1772) is best known for his transformation from scientist to seer and Christian mystic. On the evening of July 19, 1759, Swedenborg relayed lamentable news to fellow guests at a party in Gothenburg that a conflagration was just about to ignite in Stockholm, and only a few hours later, that it had been snuffed out three doors from his own residence. Three days afterward an envoy arriving from Stockholm confirmed these prognostications. Like a great many mystics and seers, Swedenborg correctly foretold the date of his own death.

Carl Gustav Jung (1875–1961), the founder of analytical psychology, was no stranger to uncanny precognitive experiences. In October of 1913, Jung experienced a series of precognitive visions and dreams about the First World War. Later, on December 12, 1913, he claimed that, "I was sitting at my desk…thinking over my fears. Then I let myself drop. Suddenly it was as if the ground literally gave way beneath my feet, and I plunged down into the dark depths. But then, abruptly, at not too great a depth, I landed on my feet in a soft, sticky mess" (Jung, 1963a, p. 179). Looking around he saw that he was inside a cave with an entrance guarded by a mummified dwarf. Then a subterranean stream carrying the dead body of a blonde youth appeared, followed by an enormous black beetle and a rising sun. The vision ended with the water turning into blood.

One of the most compelling precognitive dreams involved Morgan Robertson (1861–1915), an American writer of novels and short stories. In 1898 he wrote a novel entitled *The Wreck of the Titan* about a supposed unsinkable liner that was unfortunate enough to collide with an iceberg and sink to the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean (Robertson & Stevenson, 1991). The *Titan* was described by Robertson as a triple-screw ship with 24 lifeboats and weighing in at 70,000 tons. Moreover, it was on its maiden voyage from Southampton to New York. This sounds a lot like the *Titanic*, doesn't it? In fact, the details are almost identical. Weighing in at 66,000 tons, the *Titanic* was a triple-screw ship with 20 lifeboats that embarked on its maiden and only voyage from Southampton to New York in 1912. Just like its fictional counterpart, the *Titanic* struck an iceberg and sank. The homonymous nature of these gargantuan sea vessels, the *Titan* and the *Titanic*, is also difficult to attribute to pure chance.

But it appears Robertson wasn't the only person to have prophetic dreams and omens relating to the *Titanic* disaster. For two nights in a row, a man named J. Connon Middleton was plagued by visionary nightmares in which the protagonist was a megalithic passenger ship. Middleton reports seeing the ship's bow bobbing up and down

in a vast and desolate ocean while distressed passengers splash frantically about in the water. These dreams were both disconcerting and dysregulating, given that in ten days or so he was due to sail to New York for a business conference abroad the RMS *Titanic*. Fortunately for him, the conference was cancelled a week before the trip.

Incidentally, the renowned American president Abraham Lincoln was also well acquainted with the precognitive faculty. Elected to the presidency in 1860, Lincoln vividly recalls glancing into a mirror and seeing a duplicated image of himself. In relaying the event to his biographer, Ward H. Lamon, Lincoln professes that he interpreted the visionary experience as a potent symbol of his fate—an ominous sign that re-election to a second term would end prematurely with his own assassination. In the aftermath came a very disturbing dream in which he perceived mourners engaged in heart-wrenching lamentation. He followed the sound of the harrowing sobs down to the East Room and there he discovered a sickening surprise: "Before me was a catafalque on which rested a corpse wrapped in funeral vestments. Around it were stationed soldiers who were acting as guards" (Radin, 1997, p. 118). When Lincoln asked them, "Who is dead in the White House?" they responded, "The president, he was killed by an assassin" (Radin, 1997, p. 118). Unfortunately, this harrowing nightmare manifested in the physical world; Lincoln died at 7:22am on April 15, 1865, after having been shot in the head by John Wilkes Booth, an actor and Confederate spy, at the Ford's Theatre in Washington.

In another predictive dream experience described in my own quasi-experimental inquiry into this dream type, the original *Dreamscaping Without My Timekeeper: A Critical Investigation Into Precognitive Dreams* (2014) monograph, a young female percipient with a clear psychic opening describes an eerie encounter with an eleven-year-old boy occluding the entrance to her house. Physically, he exhibits a striking resemblance to her maternal uncle who had drowned in the tumultuous floodwaters of a summer storm in 1968. The percipient never met her uncle but knew of him from old photographs and anecdotal accounts narrated by first-degree relatives. "Who are you?" she remembers asking the child. The latter answers: "I'm your uncle Nikolis, and I've come to take your grandfather for a stroll." Perturbed by the dream's fatalistic symbolism and implications, she contacted her mother the very next morning to inquire about the wellbeing of her maternal grandfather. In conversing with her it became clear that he was rushed to the

hospital emergency unit two days ago on grounds of deteriorating and abject health.

Of course, I am no stranger to this sublime class of psychical phenomena beyond the "normal" range of human experience. In 2012 I had a traumatic dream where I was told by a phlegmatic and somewhat detached physician that I was dying. "You've got till next Tuesday, Wednesday at most," he informed me in a blithe and nonchalant tone. Hearing the proposed date of my own death jolted me from my sleep. It was Saturday, August 25. By the following Wednesday the dreadful feelings associated with that dream had evaporated from consciousness and I had recalibrated and returned to my baseline state of jocularity, frivolity, and nonchalance. On that day, I was cogitating about my long-distance esoteric studies at Exeter University. At one point, I found myself staring at an electronic photo of staff members and students taken during an October 2011 conference on the sumptuous grassy-green grounds of the university and feeling a sentimental sense of kinship with its smiling subjects. Leading the academic charge was Professor Nicholas Goodricke-Clarke, the Director of the Exeter Centre for the Study of Esotericism. Several days later I received word from the university that Nicholas had passed away on Wednesday, August 29, after a "brief illness," the day I was supposed to "die."

The best evidence in support of precognition in general comes from animal research, controlled card-guessing studies, and random number generator experiments conducted in laboratory-style settings. In 1989, a meta-analysis published by paranormal investigators Charles Honorton and Diane C. Ferrari critically examined 309 studies involving forced-choice precognition tests conducted between 1935 and 1987 on a total of fifty thousand random participants by sixty-two different investigators (Radin, 1997). That's an astounding two million trials all together! What they found was unparalleled and contradicted the skeptical position that the precognitive faculty is nothing more than a figment of the human imagination. The combined investigations yielded a statistical significance of 30% with a 1-in-1025 or 0.0975% chance that coincidence had anything to do with the descriptions of future events offered by the subjects. The role that chance played in these experiments could be compared to bursting open a packet of M&M's and having seventy of the 105 candy-coated pieces of milk chocolate land on the M side up, or to spreading seventy fans around the house and then having a breeze from the kitchen window rotate the set of propellers at precisely the same speed. What are the chances of that happening?

In the early 1900s the aeronautical engineer and military aircraft designer John William Dunne (1866–1949) became fascinated with precognitive dreams, orchestrating and successfully executing his own scientific investigation in an attempt to clarify their more obscure qualities and consequently shed light upon the nature of human consciousness. After acquainting himself with the content, frequency, and temporal aspects of his own precognitive dreams, Dunne arrived at an ostensibly radical philosophical conjecture: the precognitive faculty wasn't the exclusive province and birthright of psychics and clairvoyants at all but a psychical ability latent in the entire population. Seeking validation for this hypothesis, he set up a variable-controlled experiment with an orthodox method of dream recall (i.e., recording dreams in as much detail as possible immediately upon awakening) for the sake of juxtaposing dream fragments and real-world phenomena, and collecting information about recurring impressions that had initially presented themselves for observation in dreams.

His data set supported the idea that future impressions do seep into conscious awareness as early as a day before their real-world manifestation, although most are pretty trivial and minor—phrases and words in newspaper clippings, items like stamps and seeds, the physiognomies of known and unknown individuals, and ornamental designs. Had Dunne been seeking the "Big Dreams" characterized by comprehensive details as to what would be unfurling in the percipient's imminent future, he would have surely been disappointed. Nonetheless, these transient snippets were enough to convince Dunne that precognition was an ordinary feature of our perceptual interface with the universe and not extraordinary as conventionally supposed.

Save for striking awe and reverence in the intellectually curious among us, precognitive dreams allude to the existence of underlying mechanisms of action that cannot presently be explained or quantified by the empirical methods of a Newtonian, reductionist science. They remain in concert with a transdimensional and metaphysical worldview which both condones intentionality and agency, and concedes by default that the future may, to some degree, be determined. Implicit here is that the cosmos cannot be causal in an absolute sense. Our ability to thwart precognitive dreams and visionary experiences from coming-to-be by consciously aborting one sequential step of a decision-making process means we can still exercise free will. We can wield some world-fashioning power and live in the pockets of a paradoxical world, no doubt.

It has been many years since the publication of the original *Dreamscaping Without My Timekeeper: A Critical Investigation Into Precognitive Dreams* (2014) monograph. Fortunately, the ebullient emotions and prodigious curiosity it generated have not dissipated from memory. I have vivid recollections of becoming absorbed in the study of extraordinary dreams; of devouring Dunne's *An Experiment with Time*; and of subsequently replicating it using the exact same methodology. The most gratifying thing about deepest engagement with this subject matter was bearing witness to inner transformation as subjects discovered, grappled with, and came to terms with a higher teleological process of information transfer that was paradoxically both personal and impersonal, alienating and all-encompassing. While some found that scrutinizing the phenomenon with quasi-experimental lenses rendered it legitimate and a respectable topic of scientific inquiry, others believed an empirical approach to an age-old affair was redundant and added nothing new or of any substantial worth to the mind–matter debate. When an e-mail containing details of the study circulated to subscribers of my website, one respondent chivalrously retorted: "I don't need science to validate these claims when I know in my heart of hearts it's real. Science has a lot of catching up to do." She made a valid point; nonetheless, authentication using a quasi-experimental approach was important to me so I went ahead anyway. The rest is history.

This book not only recapitulates details of my 2014 precognitive dreams experiment, but also offers philosophical extrapolations that extend logically from the observations and findings. Precognitive dreams overturn the Cartesian-Kantian epistemological box couching the unidimensional and linear notion of time, and because of this it is important to begin with expository musings on the history and evolution of science and our temporal constructs. "The Divorce of Body and Soul and Their Celebrated Reunion" and "A Short Introduction to the Time Riddle" are the inaugural two chapters. Succeeding these is "The Precognitive Faculty: An Age-Old Phenomenon," a sweeping discussion of precognition. Chapter 4, "Serial Time and Its Implications," shifts the trajectory from the general to something more specific—the novel theory of "Serialism" pioneered by Dunne in his own groundbreaking work which sought to contextualize the emergent evidence. The principal observations and findings of my own investigation are described explicitly in Chapter 5, entitled "Knotted Into Your Dream Tapestry." Chapter 6, entitled "Memories of the Future," both itemizes and scrutinizes the extraordinary dreams described by the participants themselves. The

following chapter, “Fitting the Facts Like a Glove,” describes a long-forgotten quasi-scientific framework which accommodates for the specific phenomenology of dream precognition. “Intrusions and Free Will,” the eighth and final chapter, discusses some of the implications for human intentionality and autonomy, known as free will in the vernacular.

CHAPTER ONE

THE DIVORCE OF BODY AND SOUL AND THEIR CELEBRATED REUNION

Fig. 1-1. A symbolic rendition of the cosmos

The sciences endeavor to reach some kind of consensus regarding our origins, constitution, limitations, and the projected outcome of our targeted behaviors on both the personal and collective levels. When I think of true science, I think of an aesthetic Gaea-based empirical philosophy mediated by the politic of unbiased observation, a process of critical inquiry that resists an overwhelming urge to divorce phenomena from the greater cosmos and understand them in mechanistic and reductive terms. This includes investigations

carried out in artificial laboratory-style or natural settings where mutuality and symbiosis take precedence over hierarchy and competition.

Unfortunately, this beneficent, amicable kind of science clashes with the promotion of empire-building and ego-stroking in the industrialized West, invoking an unabashed encounter with ethics and morals that most would prefer to circumvent. When it comes to the business savvy twenty-first-century citizen, it seems that heightened feelings of self-esteem, personal recognition, and accolades take precedence over the interests of the collective, even over the welfare of our planet Earth. There is no room for sharing, I-rub-your-back-you-rub-mine sentiments, or zealous proclamations of gratitude for the contributions of another. Instead, there is an overidentification with peers in a Darwinian tundra where only the brightest, fittest, and most willing to assassinate and trample all over like-minded others are held in any esteem. A casual visit to the laboratory of any reputable research institute seeking to make important discoveries in the biomedical sciences will swiftly confirm this. Thus far, Gaea-based empiricism exists as a utopian desire in the imagination of the philanthropic minority, and from the look of things it is destined to remain there for a while yet.

Irrespective of discipline, each science begins its lifecycle as an immature and tentative paradigm loosely held together by a set of assumptions. These assumptions or principles are interlinked, always take root from within the sociocultural and historical milieu, and almost always endorse views antithetical and antagonistic to those of the orthodox prerogative for matters to do with the cultivation of knowledge about Nature. There may or may not be consensus on their legitimacy and feasibility; however, over time they come to be accepted as absolute truth. Two concepts that are native to our modern classification of reality are the ideas of three-dimensional space and causation.

The first idea, three-dimensional space, is a sixteenth-century artefact birthed in the mind of German mathematician Johannes Kepler (1571–1630), who deduced that the triune aspect of the Godhead translated across to all dimensions of existence; the second idea, causation, was a dualistic Cartesian inference, made by none other than French philosopher Rene Descartes (1596–1650), attributing the immutability and rational nature of the Christian Godhead to natural phenomena in the physical world. All our scientific endeavors since that time, in fact the entire evolution of

physics from a particle-based (classical) science to a frequency-based (quantum) science, proceed from these two fundamental assumptions.

After a generation of precocious theorists have laid the foundations of this new science, a subsequent generation conditioned to accept wholesale the formative premises of their predecessors will conduct their experiments and make extrapolations according to the existing framework, utterly unconscious of the fact that they're doing so. Over inordinate periods of time their methods churn up empirical data that are incompatible with the orthodox paradigm, strengthening the resolve of the burgeoning counterculture. While the sturdiest supporters of the traditional view will remain unnerved and continue attributing these anomalies either to methodological flaws, misperceptions, or experimenter biases, a more discerning minority resistant to absolute conditioning will interpret these rogue facts as salient hallmarks of a specious philosophical orientation. Eventually a progressive wave of thinking instigated at the behest of its chief detractors spurs a creative kinesis known as a *scientific revolution* from whence a novel, more sophisticated paradigm emerges. All subsequent research objectives are oriented or re-oriented within the new paradigm, and the cycle repeats.

Now, let's utilize this model to give a step-by-step explanation of how soul and body, or mind and matter, bifurcated during the scientific revolution of the early modern period. Plato, the classical philosopher, initiated dualistic thinking by suggesting the concepts of soul and body be divided. After that time, the idea that the subtle energy of spirit animated gross matter formed an integral component of the dominant worldview, which was animistic in quality and the scope of its concerns. Ever since the heterogeneous group of religious and philosophical writings of the *Corpus Hermeticum* implicated the human mind as an embodied aspect of the Divine Mind or *Nous*, the literati of late antiquity, the Early Middle Ages, and the Renaissance were content to regard humanity as the intercessor between the wholly divine or transcendent and the physical, ephemeral realms.

Preindustrialized societies believed that various dimensions, the psychical and physical, all emanated from the Divine Mind, differed in density, and could be found amalgamated in humans. The latter aspect was a pivotal factor in determining the collective morale because it separated humans from the rest of created Nature, bequeathing to them a cherished and privileged position in the eyes of the Godhead. Its obvious compatibility with the machinations of the Catholic Church made it the only adequate vehicle through which bishops, priests, and aspiring scholars could fathom cosmic

geography. Sadly, its fanatical petitioning by dogmatists with an axe to grind culminated in some rather wild extrapolations about the nature of the cosmos, such as a geocentric model for the solar system. Despite the early reformations to cosmogony, soul and body remained united in a world teeming with disembodied minds, supernatural agencies, and the eminence of God.

But then, during a most productive period branded by modern historians of science as the Scientific Revolution (1550–1700), there was an abrupt shift in the nature of critical inquiry. Nicolaus Copernicus (1473–1543) rationalized his celestial observations in terms of a heliocentric model; Kepler used detailed observations of the planetary orbits made with a telescope to justify this new model; Galileo Galilei (1564–1642) described planetary mechanics in mathematical and geometrical terms that did not require the invocation of occult or vital forces; and Isaac Newton (1642–1727) consolidated this more mechanistic and quantitative manner of knowing by proposing his law of universal gravitation. Newton came up with some pretty convincing descriptions of how gravity and motion worked in a fluid and stable universe, planetary mechanics, the electromagnetic color spectrum comprising visible light, and the nature of the earthly tides. Systematically outlined in the colossal *Philosophiae Naturalis Principia Mathematica* (1687) or *The Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy* (in English), these principles became the formative assumptions of classical science.

Of course, much of the conceptual groundwork for classical science had already been done beforehand by Descartes and Galileo. Echoing the Neoplatonic theory of matter as four elements with primary (hot, cold, dry, and moist) and secondary (soft, hard, sweet, and sour) qualities, Galileo had pioneered a new theory compartmentalizing the qualities of matter according to whether or not they lent themselves to quantification; primary qualities consisted of motion, weight, and size, and indeed all that was impersonal, objective, and measurable, while secondary qualities encompassed the more subjective aspects like heat, taste, and color. Primary qualities defined phenomena independent and distinct from the sentient observer, and were thus valuable contributors to the growing repositories of knowledge about the natural world. Secondary qualities, on the other hand, were unsuitable for such purposes because they belonged to the transient, immeasurable, and subjective stream of the mental world.

Descartes entered into communion with this new way of understanding the world by positing a clear distinction between

mind which embodied deliberate activity, and matter, the authentic stamp of involuntary activity. Our world could now be perceived through the kaleidoscope of dualism. This swift leap in the manner of encountering reality led to an absolute restructuring of what was deemed tenable and rational, what constituted absolute knowledge, and what technical processes were deemed germane and adequate in the cultivation of such knowledge. Further still, the invention of the microscope in 1590 placed the philosophical quartet of determinism, materialism, positivism, and atomism squarely within the dominant culture; determining the mechanisms of action behind primary, real phenomena and predicting their future orientation involved a step-by-step process of dissecting, observing infrastructure and anatomy, and making shrewd deductions about cause and effect based on local interactions amid the sum of its parts.

Because the new science could only pass judgments with enumeration and quantification, anything remotely qualitative—symbolic correspondences between objects and persons, aesthetics, ethical sensibility, values, feelings, emotions, mentation, soul, spirit, consciousness, living systems of transformation, and the like—became imperceptible and hence empirically invalid and nonexistent. As the authority of the Catholic Church receded into obscurity, so too were individuals and groups relieved of the imposed Adamic burden of upholding righteousness and ameliorating ancestral sins. Under the auspices of the new impartial science, they could reclaim ancient birthrights allowing them to make what they pleased of art, society, music, history, industrialization, socioeconomic burdens, and technological necessities. The final appraisal of this development must be left to the discretion of the reader. Lest we forget that liberal democratic systems of governance birthed through the impersonal shadow cast by our "normal science" has allowed the diabolical and manipulative among us to exploit the handicapped and disenfranchised minorities.

Existential philosophy was born, gifting the freedom to create and find meaning, value, and ethical sensibility in places that had been decreed anathema by the church. There was also a shift in the meaning of "center"; whereas formerly it had incorporated qualitative and quantitative measures and multiple ontologies, now it was to be understood as the matrix of atomic structure alone. There was only one reality: the physical or physiological. The occult, the animistic, and the holistic paradigms that had reigned supreme during the Renaissance suddenly found themselves without dignity

and worth, cast out of scientific discourse like a purpled fruit. Mother Nature awoke to find herself fallen and disenchanted.

Now, conditions were rife for the permanent division of the secular and scientific from the religious and supernatural, establishing a binary system much more comprehensible to our twenty-first-century minds. Undisputed authority over the physical world, everything real, was bestowed upon science and the rest, the speculative and illusory world of mental images, to religion and philosophy. This shattering of the esoteric trope led to the seventeenth-century divorce of chemistry from alchemy, astronomy from astrology, and of atomic-based medicine from the more primordial esoteric systems of magical healing.

With the inception of this new rationalism (i.e., the Age of Reason), it was acceptable for scientists and philosophers to busy themselves investigating the properties of atoms and chemical reactions but not with processes that involved metallic transmutation, spagyrics, and the isolation of vital life forces; it was reputable to petition abstract mathematical reasoning in understanding the physical laws confining planets and other celestial bodies to orbits but not to use the former as a means of determining the composition of human character and predicting future events; and it was respectable to seek out invading pathogens in determining the sudden loss of somatic health rather than attributing causes of disease to supernatural agencies and then administering prescriptions of metal colloids and prayers to remedy the problem. The usurpation of a holistic and meaningful science by a reductionist one was almost complete.

The eighteenth century bore witness to great advances in evolutionary theory, inadvertently ejecting the omniscient God from his eternal kingdom and depriving humans of their rightful share in that divinity. As it turns out, the coherent idea that life forms underwent transmutation from simple to more complex organisms through adaptive mechanisms at work in the environment was not original to Charles Darwin and his theory of natural selection. It was actually present in proto-biological discourse as early as 1809 in the guise of Lamarck's "transmutation theory" which attempted to determine how the operation of natural laws might be reconciled with a divine intelligence indifferent to its creative endeavors.

What the ingenious Darwin did was to bring something completely new to the table; founded upon a succession of sound geographical and geological observations, Darwin noted a predilection in Mother Nature's forms for the expression of phenotypes that

maximized defenses and exploited available resources. The powerful dynamic behind nature as a "great machine," according to Darwin, was survival of the fittest; in other words, the competitive urgency to separate oneself from others by cultivating behaviors and characteristics that augment one's likelihood of surviving in a rudimentary world of predator–prey relationships. He envisioned survival as a matter of being better equipped to handle threats and better at maximizing or capitalizing upon available resources than other organisms who subsist in the same niche environment as oneself.

Nobody seemed to anticipate the far-reaching consequences of rendering such an opinion public better than his Harvard professor, Adam Sedgwick, who suggested that unleashing it to the scientific intelligentsia would end up corroborating the viral advance of materialism and debasing humanity. As history would decree, Darwin chose to ignore the advice and forewarning of the Harvard professor and went ahead with the publication of *On the Origin of Species* (1859). When colleague Thomas Henry Huxley (1825–1895) finally caught whiff of natural selection, he narrowed it and applied it to the classification of human beings, forging a phylogenetic link between apes and humans that reduced the latter to a mere epiphenomenon of evolutionary processes, and an accidental one at that. There was a seductive, albeit unprecedented, feasibility to this for theoretical biology because it enabled its liberated thinkers to throw even more dirt upon the illusory notion of human distinction propagated by the ecclesiastical authority over the last three centuries. There were no longer any obscure portions of the cosmic puzzle that the church leaders could cling onto in the hope that they might one day reclaim relinquished philosophical terrain pertaining to the truth of the human condition.

Having monopolized both knowledge and the legitimate methods of acquiring it, science now came forth with the impression of humans as intelligent mammals, something that falls way short of the embodied divine spark described in the *Corpus Hermeticum* and other Renaissance writings. Reducing the human condition to little more than a bundle of psychobiological impulses created the ultimate cultural dialectic and springboard for Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) to formulate his unconscious theories of the Oedipal and Electra complexes, in addition to an explosion of economic and political materialism of the Marxist kind.

Even though Darwin never intended for his theory to influence or supplant the collective values and ethics of industrialized societies,

many individuals found the idea of being the fittest specimen of their kind in their chosen vocation too enchanting a notion to either ignore or reject. The only worthwhile cause in a world governed by chance was to wield the conscious will for self-serving purposes, or in fact anything that might secure advantages and privileges over fellow brethren for the sake of posterity. In the face of such a valueless science, it mattered not how savage, brutal, or ruthless one was in achieving and sustaining these ends—survival of the fittest was a vastly impersonal process without the added baggage of mind, or conscience for that matter. The nineteenth-century German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900) captured the quintessence of this debased secularization best with the phrase: "God is dead" (McConnell, 1993, p. 163).

To the humanists' dismay, the conceptual ambivalence created by a scientific worldview in which an outer, measurable reality remained incongruent with the value-laden mental world of private experience ended up birthing a proto-psychological discipline that paraded under the flag of behaviorism. Behaviorism continued pushing the Darwinian agenda by outright denying the self-directive and creative aspects of conscious awareness and dismissing them as metaphysical delusions of the worst kind. The denial would have stemmed partly from the reductionist prerogative of the time and partly from scientists' obvious inability to describe the purposeful scope of cognition and emotion strictly in behavioral terms. This created a persecutory atmosphere in the scientific arena where intimations of top-down causation, meaning the ability of human thought, willpower, or motivation to influence and enact change in the environment, was tantamount to, say, repeating ad nauseam to a bunch of Pentecostals the trope that Jesus Christ and Mary Magdalene were a married couple with a daughter.

The will to carve meaningful narratives into the fabric of reality, the will to exercise autonomy and self-determination, and the capacity to formulate systematic plans and execute them could not be verified in any quantifiable, objective sense; hence they were metaphysical fabrications worthy of joining the same historical dustbin as the pseudosciences of alchemy, astrology, and theurgy. There was nothing of any scientific worth to be found within the human head, or without for that matter.

Behaviorism's fervent supporter, the Harvard psychologist B.F. Skinner (1904–1990), drove home this particular sentiment with the words, "A scientific analysis of behavior dispossesses autonomous man and turns the control he has been said to exert over to the

environment" (Radin, 1997, p. 283). The absurdity of this position was endemic from the 1920s to the 1960s, a time when behaviorist conformists and converts forced lab animals like rats and rabbits to run miles and miles through the interconnected tunnels and pathways of their micro-labyrinths, convinced that their cumulative data sets would eventually illuminate an absolute understanding of the human plight in purely psychophysical terms. Soon everyone was aboard the Pavlovian bandwagon, seeking a plethora of conditioned responses to deliberately paired stimuli that would show, once and for all, that quantifiable similarities with our ancestors, the subhuman primates, far outweighed any subjectively perceived differences.

For a while behaviorism went about its business, assuming that it was taking out the dirty laundry, dusting the bookshelves, sweeping the floors, and airing the bedrooms of scientists and literati enamored of an austerely impersonal world. Things just weren't as complicated as what past metaphysical sympathizers had thought, and the simpler explanations were far more plausible than convoluted ones in accounting for mental epiphenomena. The new methodology sounded really good on paper, infallible even, until one day it dawned upon the scientific housekeepers that the detritus and dust they were desperately trying to banish from sight was simply re-accumulating in the cellar and the attic.

Let's proceed with some examples. Russian scientists working to consolidate Pavlov's paradigm in the first half of the twentieth century found that guinea pigs and rabbits subjected repeatedly to a dual prescription of a trumpet blast and a bacteria injection became conditioned to the associational network so that eventually sound alone could elicit an immune response (Pert, 1997, p. 190). This top-down connection between the unconscious mind and the immune system, or the limbic brain and physiology, was explored further in the 1970s by the co-founder of psychoneuroimmunology, the psychologist Robert Ader (1932–2011), and his associate Nicolas Cohen; in their experiments, methodical injections of a cocktail comprised of saccharin and an immunosuppressant in lab rats inevitably forged an association between the mental prescription of anything sweet, or sweet-tasting, and immune suppression (Pert, 1997, p. 190-91).

Roughly two decades later, Howard Hall took the final plunge into behaviorism's no-man's land, daring to utilize scientific advances in microbiology to authenticate past clinical anecdotes implicating the unconscious mind as the eternal wellspring of anomalous healing.

Under tightly controlled experimental conditions he was able to demonstrate beyond all reasonable doubt how conscious intervention through dynamic psychotherapies like guided imagery and self-hypnosis increased white cell stickiness, thus enhancing immune function (Pert, 1997, p. 191). Historically, it was the first empirical demonstration of mind–matter interaction.

Mind and matter weren't cognates and synergy between them shouldn't have existed, yet here it was staring the behaviorists in the face like morning rays that light up an entire room from a peripheral slit in the shutters. To their utter consternation, dismissing it from the experimental literature a second time around was going to be even harder, given that the empirical evidence in support of a mind–body link aligned with the prevailing scientific method could be replicated by any scientist inquisitive and open-minded enough to accept the proposition as a possibility. Where there's a will there's a way, though, and for a short time the behaviorists remedied this problem with punitive, demeaning, and debasing attacks towards proselytes of the holistic health movement.

We know that hidden beneath the patina of any existing scientific paradigm are emotionally-laden assumptions that researchers will not part with for obvious reasons, something Austrian psychoanalyst Wilhelm Reich (1897–1957) found out when he dared postulate that leading a repressed emotional life could manifest carcinomas and tumors in the body (Pert, 1997, p. 191). Reich's unintentional ruffling of the status quo was castigated and penalized in a manner that would have titillated the diabolical masterminds and frontrunners of fascist movements; in an act most paradigmatic of a barbaric and immoral attack against the spirit of true science, Reich's intellectual corpus was gathered and incinerated at the behest of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in the sole book-burning event to be held in the United States and endorsed by the U.S. Constitution.

Thankfully, no scientific truth may be combusted and the ideas simply passed into the expansive continuum of practical esotericism offered by alternative paradigms like humanistic and transpersonal psychology with their emphasis on self-determination, intentionality, and subtle energy. Following in Reich's footsteps, a psychologist working at the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF), in the 1980s named Lydia Temoshok found that cancer patients who allowed their inner emotional voices free reign experienced accelerated rates of recovery that were significantly higher than those who did not (Pert, 1997, p. 191-92). Again, the orthodox science subscribed to by the behaviorists was implicating the indivisibility of