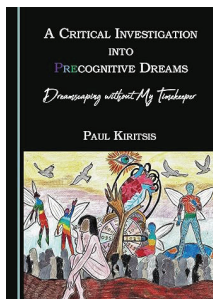


BOOK REVIEW

# Review of A Critical Investigation Into Precognitive Dreams

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## AUTHOR DISCLOSURES

I was drawn to review this book because of my longstanding interest in related subject matters. While my academic discipline is Critical Futures Studies (Inayatullah, 2018), a significant portion of my work has centered upon what I call “integrated intelligence” (Anthony 2008, 2023), which has overlaps with “the nonlocal mind,” (Radin, 2006), and sometimes termed “the extended mind” (Sheldrake, 2013). An integrated intelligence suggests that consciousness transcends the mind-body system, and ultimately, both immediate time and linear space. It contains seven core modalities, and one of those is precognition. I have recorded dreams for over three decades, and have experienced many that I consider to be precognitive. I believe that precognition is an extant human cognitive function, and that non-ordinary states of consciousness - including trance and dream states - are one of the ideal ways to experience it.

For example, early in the morning of March 15, 2019, I dreamt I was walking in the mountains above a distant coastal city. Suddenly, a group of highly agitated people dressed in Muslim attire rushed past me. I looked down again to the city and saw smoke rising from it, as if a disaster had just occurred. A voice then said: “Fifty people dead.” I awoke, spooked, and recorded the dream in my diary, then went back to sleep. The next morning, the news came that forty-nine people had been massacred at a mosque in Christchurch, a coastal city in New Zealand (with the New Zealand Alps inland to the west). A day later, one more of the injured died, bringing the total dead to fifty.

I have read a good deal of the literature on parapsychology and have, at times, been active in some parapsychology (or associated) discussion forums online. I am also a member of the *Consciousness Society* (founded by Allan Combs and Stan Krippner), and Paul Kiritsis is also a member of that online community. I have received no funding for any of my work in these areas up to this day.

Therefore, I’m clearly a “proponent” of certain kinds of psi phenomena (most notably, precognition, clairvoyance, telepathy, and remote viewing).

## CONTENT OVERVIEW

Paul Kiritsis’ *A Critical Investigation into Precognitive Dreams* makes a case for the veracity of precognitive dreams, and shares research and case studies that the author has conducted on the subject. Kiritsis makes no pretense at being an impartial investigator into the topic. For Kiritsis, precognition is not simply a cognitive capacity of psychics and clairvoyants but is a common human experience. Nonetheless, this is not a book for the layman. Though short in length, the book explores history, philosophy, and science in a scholarly fashion.



In 2014, Kiritsis published a monograph called *Dreamscaping Without My Timekeeper: A Critical Investigation into Precognitive Dreams*. A significant portion of this more recent book (Kiritsis, 2020) is to recapitulate details of the author's prior precognitive dreams research and also to offer philosophical extrapolations that extend logically from his observations and findings.

The first two chapters - "The Divorce of Body and Soul and Their Celebrated Reunion" and "A Short Introduction to the Time Riddle," - delve into the intricate relationship between physical and metaphysical aspects of precognition while offering a concise introduction to the puzzling nature of time. Kiritsis questions the unidimensional construct of time and discusses the difficulties in measuring its flow. He follows Immanuel Kant's theory that time and space are constructs of human perception, suggesting they may not exist independently of our minds. The Western atomistic, mechanical worldview promotes a disconnected view of nature. Yet pre-cognitive dreams suggest that there are "underlying mechanisms of action" that cannot easily be accounted for by Newtonian, reductionist science and can be better explained by a "trans-dimensional and metaphysical worldview" that acknowledges the seeming contradictions of personal agency and determinism.

In these early chapters, Kiritsis traces the impact of thinkers like Johannes Kepler (the triune aspect of the Godhead) and the dualism of Rene Descartes (the static and rational nature of the Christian Godhead in the physical world). The author also explores the Scientific Revolution, and most notably, the impact of the work of Copernicus, Kepler, and Galileo, with Newton's mechanistic and quantitative principles eventually becoming the presuppositions of modern science. Eventually, Darwinism and behaviorism concretized the mechanistic worldview, with its rigid division of the secular and scientific from the religious and "supernatural," with science - (aided by existential philosophy) - becoming the final arbiter of truth. Kiritsis argues that the qualitative - aesthetics, ethical sensibility, values, feelings, emotions, mentation, soul, spirit, consciousness, living systems of transformation - effectively became empirically invalid and unreal.

Chapter 3 is entitled "The Precognitive Faculty: An Age-Old Phenomenon." Here, Kiritsis delves into the historical context of precognition and how it challenges Cartesian and Kantian epistemology by implying a linear notion of time. This chapter motivates the exploration of the history of science and assumed notions of time.

"Serial Time and Its Implications" is the title of Chapter 4, where the focus shifts to John William Dunne's "serialism" theory and its connection to precognitive dreams. Kiritsis discusses how higher selves in different time di-

mensions may transmit information, potentially altering future events. Jung's related concepts are also explored.

Chapter 5 is "Knotted Into Your Dream Tapestry," and details Kiritsis' quasi-experimental investigation into precognitive dreams, conducted in 2014. Fifteen participants documented their dreams and waking experiences over several days, forming a foundation for the study's findings.

"Memories of the Future" is longest chapter in the book, and it meticulously examines the extraordinary dreams recounted by Kiritsis' study participants. The dreams are graded for their connection to waking events, revealing that a majority of precognitive dream fragments demonstrated powerful correlations.

Chapter 7 is entitled "Fitting the Facts Like a Glove", and Kiritsis presents a scientific framework tailored to the unique phenomenology of dream precognition. This framework aims to provide a structured approach to understanding and studying precognition.

Chapter 8, "Intrusions and Free Will," contemplates the ramifications of precognition on human intentionality and autonomy. Kiritsis discusses the Benjamin Libet free will experiments and concludes that humans have free will to some extent, but there are aspects of experience and neurophysiology beyond our control and awareness.

### Pros, Cons, and the Book's Contributions to the Literature

At just under forty-five thousand words, the book is not long. The arguments are tight and succinct, with little unnecessary verbiage or digression. Most parts of the book are not difficult to read or understand. The case studies, for example, are thought-provoking and easy to comprehend.

Still, certain readers may find this volume heavy going in some places. The vocabulary is regularly challenging, and in chapter seven, where the author delves into the neuroscience of perception and the visual cortex, the reading becomes rather dense. The book is clearly aimed at the highly educated reader, one widely read in a broad range of subject matters across science and philosophy.

From my personal perspective, I have no problem with Kiritsis' "subjective" approach, but those of a more classical scientific bent might find it less satisfying. Kiritsis' attitude is consistent with the book's message: that a purely empirical attitude is not the best way to study precognitive dreams. His more holistic preferences in scientific investigations are outlined early on.

...when I think of true science, I think of an aesthetic Gaia-based empirical philosophy me-

diated by the politic of unbiased observation, a process of critical inquiry that resists an overwhelming urge to divorce phenomena from the greater Kosmos and understand them in mechanistic and reductive terms.

The text is sprinkled with somewhat “loaded” language. For example, in the introduction, he describes one of his subjects as “a young female percipient with a clear psychic opening.” (Kiritsis, 2020, p. xvi). Another, “Ms. K,” is described as having “a very powerful ‘psychic opening’ and her dreams are usually characterized by veridical information communicated telepathically about significant others in her life.”

The author does not flesh out related evidence on precognition and parapsychology, which could be seen as a shortcoming. Kiritsis merely provides a brief descriptive overview, arguing that the most compelling evidence for general precognition arises from animal research, controlled card-guessing studies, and laboratory-based random number generator experiments. Some critics may also point out that book does not reference many of the counter-arguments and criticisms of the subject matter – including mainstream scientific criticisms of psi research in general - except to be critical of them.

Overall, the “values” Kiritsis assigns to each of the subjects’ dreams seem reasonable. The dreams and real-world correlations are often impressive. In one description, for example, “Ms. K” dreamed her late uncle Nikolis came to her, looking rather serious, and stating: “The time has come for your grandfather to come with me.” That next morning, Ms. K received a call from her mother, informing her that her grandfather had just had a stroke. She immediately rushed to the hospital, and she was able to have a heart-warming exchange with him before he slipped into a coma and died. I believe that the valuation of this dream as evidentially “excellent” is warranted.

Still, I found one or two of the “excellent” evaluations to be less convincing. For example, one dream experienced by “Ms. P” describes her as camping out in a tent on a beautiful island. A “tall, stocky man with a deep, raspy voice and a fair complexion” approaches her and says, “You will have to come and join me then.” The appearance, voice, and mannerisms of the man in the dream spooked Ms P, and she had a sense of foreboding. The following day, the news broke of Anders Behring Breivik, a far-right radicalized man, going on a massive killing spree on a Norwegian island. The proximity in time is indeed notable, and Ms P stated that there was a striking resemblance between Breivik and her dream figure. Yet there is a significant differential between being asked to go with someone who appears spooky, and a massacre of 77 peo-

ple. The absence of related details diminishes its evidential value, in my opinion (my precognitive dream, outlined at this review’s beginning and which has obvious similarities to Ms P’s, does have more precise information).

Kiritsis’ dream evaluation/categorization process is borrowed from Dunne’s *Experiment With Time*. The subjectivity of this is arguably unavoidable, given the nature of the subject matter (brain scans can merely provide neurophenomenological correlations). The study strongly suggests the difficulties in analyzing and discussing these kinds of phenomena. Still, Kiritsis is employing language and metaphysics outside of “normal science” (Kuhn, 2012), perhaps rendering the text somewhat uncomfortable to those operating from a more mainstream scientific epistemological perspective.

It would thus be interesting to see how, say, a sceptic would grade these same dreams. Would they be more critical and find them to be less evidential of precognition? Having a greater variety of evaluators would provide a broader range of perspectives and better elucidate the strengths and weaknesses of the dreams as evidence for precognition.

From my personal experience and reading of the literature, I believe that Kiritsis is correct that “extrasensory” information “received” through visual imagery and sound is often distorted, and often symbolic in nature (rather than literal). I believe that Kiritsis is also correct that “telepathic” communications between individuals (and groups – “an entanglement of minds in a collective unconscious”) can occur while dreaming. He suggests that is what happened above, with Ms. P and the Breivik massacre. Because of its telepathic nature, argues Kiritsis, Ms. P’s dream fragment is anecdotal evidence substantiating the reality of “psi” phenomena.

Kiritsis is an advocate of the transmission theory of consciousness, which he makes clear when he likens consciousness to the online world, and the brain to a computer desktop, with the latter being capable of downloading software programs onto its hard drive. The author freely states his liking for the explanatory power of property dualism (and in particular that of British philosopher Colin McGinn), which he finds “both inherently true and aesthetically pleasing.” Juxtaposed with the prevalent eliminative materialism of much modern science and the latter’s inherent alienation from nature and cosmos, Kiritsis much prefers the former.

Ultimately, I find myself in agreement with the author that a genuine examination of precognition requires a willingness to suspend judgment and that it is important for understanding precognition to explore the phenomenon using first-person methods.

## RECOMMENDATION

As Kiritsis points out, there is a need for a more open and receptive attitude - and methodological approach - to studying precognitive dreams, because a merely empirical and detached approach is inadequate. That attitude represents a paradigmatic and civilizational stalemate that may need to be transcended. Perhaps it will be that Kiritsis' short but scholarly volume will play a small role in the required shift. The intended audience is clearly a well-educated one, and the subsequent sophisticated writing style is arguably beyond the range of the layman. Whether or not its mixture of physical science and alternative philosophy is a strength or a weakness may vary according to reader preferences. It is nonetheless highly recommended for deep thinkers (and deep-seers) wishing to challenge the norms of a mainstream Western science that is stubbornly slow to question some of its own pre-suppositions.

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