

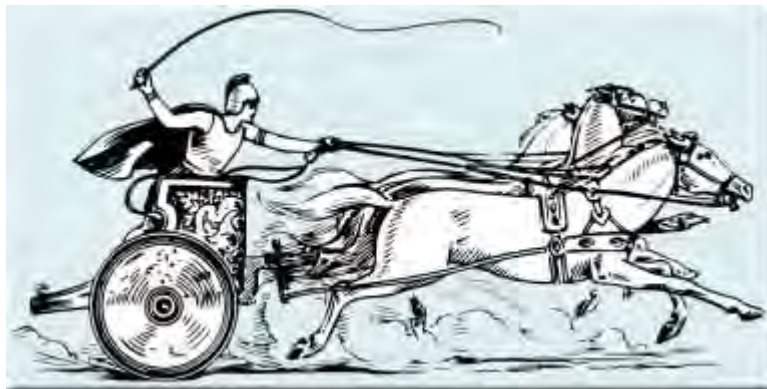


Tom Butler
Etheric Studies, (CC)2022
Seeking to Understand the Nature of Reality
ethericstudies.org

Etheric Studies Occasional Update 11

Tom Butler, April 2022

(Also at <https://mailchi.mp/d169fd92dc94/etheric-studies-occasional-update-11>)



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The God of Death explained to a seeker in the [Katha Upanishad](#): *“Know the Self to be the master of the chariot, and the body to be the chariot. Know the intellect to be the charioteer, and the mind to be the reins.”* 1-III-3; *“The senses they speak of as the horses; the objects within their view, the way. When the Self is yoked with the mind and the senses, the wise call It the enjoyer.”* 1-III-4

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Global Mind Change

I write these articles as a way to help people be more aware of how ITC and science are changing the way we need to think of our nature and the greater reality. Realizing that we are more than our physical body and learning to behave as if that is true are the first steps toward greater discerning intellect.

One of the indications that people are thus spiritually progressing is their increasing humanism. The strong support for Ukraine due to the Russian invasion seems to reveal that there are many more humanists amongst us than I thought.

One cannot make a person be more humanist. The most important service we can offer to humankind is to cultivate the light of reason in ourselves and hold that light high for others to follow. Let the support of Ukraine be

the beginning of a more humanist order. Each of us can do our part by letting our discerning intellect guide us. Speak your truth!

BICS Winning Essay Reviews

The [Bigelow Institute for Consciousness Studies](#) (BICS) (1) 2021 essay contest has completed. The essay question was “*What is the best available evidence for the Survival of Human Consciousness after Permanent Bodily Death?*” I was accepted as a contestant but my essay was not selected.

I have finished reviewing the twenty-nine winning essays. The \$500K, \$300K and \$150K winners were reviewed in individual articles. I combined brief reviews of the eleven \$50K winners in one article. There were fifteen honorable mention, \$20K winners which I (mostly) read but only commented on a few at the end of that document.

To provide a consistent measure of how I rate the essays, I ask [six standard questions](#) about each essay:

1. Is the essay easily understood by a lay audience? [A grade of ?](#)
2. Does essay account for alternative explanation? [A grade of ?](#)
3. Does the essay include support for why the proof is evidential? [A grade of ?](#)
4. Does the essay further the reader’s understanding of survival? [A grade of ?](#)
5. Does the essay meet Bigelow’s objective? [A grade of ?](#)
6. Overall value for the paranormalist community? [A grade of ?](#)

Total Score ? ?? of a possible 60

Winning Essays

Here are the results:

1st Prize \$500,000, Jeffrey Mishlove Ph.D.

Essay Title: [Beyond the Brain: The Survival of Human Consciousness After Permanent Bodily Death](#)

[My Review of the Essay](#)

Focus: Possible proof of survival gleaned from researcher interviews

Source: Mostly testimonials from people Mishlove has interviewed.

Total Score is 32 of a possible 60

2nd Prize \$300,000, Pim van Lommel M.D.

Essay Title: [The Continuity of Consciousness: A concept based on scientific research on near-death experiences during cardiac arrest](#)

[My Review of the Essay](#)

Focus: Near-Death Experiences as proof of survival.

Source: Research concerned with Near-Death Experiences.

Total Score is 44 of a possible 60

3rd Prize \$150,000, Leo Ruickbie Ph.D.

Essay Title: [The Ghost in the Time Machine](#)

[My Review of the Essay](#)

Focus: Continuous consciousness

Source: The literature and haunt phenomena.

Total Score 46 of a possible 60

\$50K Runner Up Essays

Look for my comments for each essay in [Review of Runner Up BICS Essays](#).

Julie Beischel Ph.D. Pharmacology and Toxicology

Essay Title: [Beyond Reasonable: Scientific Evidence for Survival](#)

Focus: Mental mediumship

Source: Mostly original research

Total Score is 47 of a possible 60

Stephen E. Braude Ph.D. Philosophy

Essay Title: [A Rational Guide to the Best Evidence of Postmortem Survival](#)

Focus: Doubt about potential proofs

Source: Mostly historical

Total Score is 13 of a possible 60

Bernardo Kastrup Ph.D. Philosophy

Essay Title: [A Rational, Empirical case for postmortem survival based solely on mainstream science](#)

Focus: Metaphysical Realism

Source: philosophy (ontology, philosophy of mind)

Total Score is 35 of a possible 60

Elizabeth G. Krohn, *NDE Experiencer*

Essay Title: [The Eternal Life of Consciousness](#)

Focus: Near-Death Experience

Source: Personal experience testimonial

Total Score is 26 of a possible 60

Jeffrey Long, M.D. Radiation Oncology Physician

Essay Title: [Evidence for Survival of Consciousness in Near-Death Experiences: Decades of Science and New Insights](#)

Focus: Near-Death Experiences

Source: Website, online surveys.

Total Score is 30 of a possible 60

Michael Nahm Ph.D. Biology

Essay Title: [Climbing Mount Evidence: A Strategic Assessment of the Best Available Evidence for the Survival of Human Consciousness after Permanent Bodily Death](#)

Focus: Reincarnation

Source: Mostly the work of Ian Stevenson

Total Score is 16 of a possible 60

Sharon Hewitt Rawlette Ph.D. Philosophy

Essay Title: [Beyond Death: The Best Evidence for the Survival of Human Consciousness](#)

Focus: Compilation of phenomenal experiences

Source: Literature

Total Score is 26 of a possible 60

Alexandre Caroli Rocha Ph.D. Literary Theory, **Marina Weiler** Ph.D., **Raphael Fernandes Casseb** Ph.D.

Essay Title: [Mediumship as the Best Evidence for the Afterlife: Francisco Candido Xavier, a White Crow](#)

Focus: Mental Mediumship

Source: The life and work of Francisco Candido Xavier.

Total Score is 34 of a possible 60

Nicolas Rouleau Ph.D. Bioengineering

Essay Title: [An Immortal Stream of Consciousness: The scientific evidence for the survival of consciousness after permanent bodily death](#)

Focus: Biological production of mind (Transmission Model)

Source: Traditional model of brain.

Total Score is 25 of a possible 60

David Rousseau Ph.D. Philosophy, **Julie Billingham** BSc

Essay Title: [What would have to be true about the world? On evidence for the possibility of consciousness surviving death](#)

Focus: Philosophical speculation about what would need to be true for survival to be true.

Source: Logical progression

Total Score is 38 of a possible 60

Michael Tymn, Journalist

Essay Title: [Long Concealed, Now Revealed – Overwhelming Evidence for Life after Death](#)

Focus: Mediumship

Source: Survival research prior to 1920.

Total Score is 10 of a possible 60

\$20K Honorable Mention

Fifteen authors were given a \$20K honorable mention award. I began reviewing them but reviewing so many essays that pretty much repeated the same “proofs” as the prior essays was too much for me. They are neither scored nor commented on except for three I felt needed commenting:

[A Critical Evaluation of the Best Evidence for the Survival of Human Consciousness after Permanent Bodily Death](#)

by Chris A. Roe, Callum E. Cooper, David Lorimer & Evelyn Elsaesser

The authors wrote:

“However, in our view, the conventional explanations that have been offered to explain these phenomena, particularly in terms of the projection of meaning onto degraded or ambiguous sensory stimuli are sufficient to account for the best evidence available.” (Page 33)

The reference for this statement is from Ann Winsper’s writing. Reading her doctoral theses, under the category of “Psychological and Neuropsychological Accounts of EVP,” Winsper wrote:

“It is difficult, or impossible, to prove or disprove the existence of an afterlife and communication with the dead. However there has been considerable research into how individuals may misinterpret events as anomalous, particularly how those with an a priori belief are more likely to misinterpret events.” (Page 20)

This is the straightforward Anomalistic Psychology view of people who think paranormal phenomena may be real. That school of parapsychologists study the people and not the phenomena with the intention of proving “believers” are delusional.

Via my work with the Association TransCommunication, I have conducted studies and written thousands of words about the nature of EVP. Yet, there is this Academic-Layperson Partition which seems to assure that researchers are not required to account for what we have learned by laypeople.

[Advancing the Evidence for Survival of Consciousness](#) by Arnaud Delorme, Dean Radin, Helané Wahbeh, I see after several poorly informed comments in the preceding paragraph:

“However, misinterpretation of signals from mundane sources is an obvious problem. Purported spirit messages are usually embedded in substantial noise, giving rise to auditory pareidolia, the tendency to subjectively perceive meaning in randomness. Ideally, independent judges should be asked to assess, under blinded conditions, if they hear the same material. Alternatively, objective methods, like spectrographic analysis of purported voices, should be performed. At least one such study has been performed by Alexander MacRae, a specialist in the analysis of speech, hearing, intelligibility, and noise. He found results suggesting that EVP-evoked “voices of no natural origin” were recorded in an electromagnetically shielded chamber [67]. Thus, while most of this line of research cannot be considered as high-quality evidence for survival, some intriguing exceptions justify further investigation.

Evaluation - Survival Level 4; Grade C+

“The evidential grade is C+ because in most cases (not all), claims of voices or messages are determined subjectively, and even in cases where there is some objective evidence, the effects could still be attributable to PL, PW, or to mistakes of perception.” (Page 20)

Here, “PL” means Psi in the lab and “PW” means Psi in the wild. Thus, I think the authors are saying that EVP may be transcommunication, but it might also be Psi functioning between practitioner and recording device. We agree. And yes, probably most reported EVP are Class C misassignment of meaning. Our objective has always been to attract help sorting that question out from the academic community.

The learned authors knew about MacRae’s work because he used the ION’s shielded chamber to eliminate radiofrequency interference in EVP sessions. Had they done their due diligence, they would know that Italian researcher [Daniele Gullà](#) has conducted spectrographic analysis of EVP. And that we (ATransC) have conducted studies to establish the [objective nature of EVP](#) and [visual ITC](#).

[Pursuit of Best Evidence for Survival of Human Consciousness after Permanent Bodily Death](#) by Walter Meyer zu Erpen

The essay may not have satisfied my expectations of furthering the Survival Hypothesis but it provides an excellent overview of the phenomena of Spiritualism. The reader should set aside any thoughts of religion. Spiritualists are all about the continuation of consciousness beyond bodily death. The phenomena they study and practice ... mediumship and healing intention ... are thought to be phenomena cooperatively expressed by practitioners and discarnate helpers.

I will be recommending this essay to Spiritualists and Spiritualist-minded folk.

My Thoughts About the Essay Contest

BICS received over a thousand requests to participate in the essay contest. I was one of the 206 who were invited to submit an essay. I have spent considerable time developing the [Implicit Cosmology](#) which is based on current science and my study of ITC. That modeling represents a rather different view of duality that I felt would stand out amongst the other authors.

Virtually all of my writing these days is to explain (and thus help me understand) the implications of Instrumental TransCommunication (ITC). One of the things I watched for in the winning was an indication that the author considered the evidence of ITC. It was mostly ignored, or when it was considered, it was rejected for some really naive reasons.

Judging by how inane some of the selected essays are, I think the bottom line is that my essay was not selected because ITC is a really hard sell. I also included a proposed cosmology intended to explain why an example of ITC is evidential. I expect my amateurish attempt to explain our spiritual anatomy may have been the last straw. You can be the judge: My (unselected) BICS Entry: [Case for the Survival Hypothesis](#). Feedback is welcome.

My review of the essays was a search for new ideas and theories proposed by the authors that further our understanding of survival. However, most of the essays were regurgitations of old material. Many were compilations of accounts, past research and reported experiences that made a tall pile of ideas pointing toward proof of survival but that failed to effectively explain why the evidence is evidential.

Science is not just about evidence. It is also about hypotheses and models. Along with governance and health, the division of labor in our society includes science and education. As far as society is concerned, scientists exist to serve our need to understand our world. That understanding includes each of us having the opportunity to learn and apply principles of nature that have been codified by scientists.

Robert T. Bigelow noted in Issue 3, 2021 of the “Magazine for the Society for Psychical Review” interview that:

“Proving whether the other side exists or not is actually just the first step. The research community going back to the 1800s has been dominated by the effort to prove the existence in one way or another, or another, or another... so it has been dominated by the necessity of trying to prove the other side exists and that has gone on for almost two centuries, so at some point here, I want to move on and go to the next level up, which is probably much more profound than simply whether or not some aspect of your consciousness is going to survive your bodily death.” (Page 7)

Considering Bigelow’s objective, results of the essay contest was a very big “miss.” If there is to be one, the next step BICS might take is to convene learned opinion setters to develop a consensus metaphysical model and implied cosmology. Such a model could be a living document that is maintained by a standards committee, and which is freely available to the public in a simple to read format. Ideally, mentors would be available to explain the concepts.

The objective of any such consensus and cosmology would be to give future researchers a “stepping off” point to begin new research. But most important, individual seekers should be able to apply lessons learned in their daily living. For instance, some of the information in the [First Sight Theory](#) book offers potentially helpful guidance on useful behavior and attitude characteristics to be a successful psychic. [Predictions of The Model of Pragmatic Information About RSPK](#) research report offers important ways of thinking about how physical seances are

conducted. Understanding the influence of human instincts on decision making helps a person realize the need for greater discernment.

These concepts are not reaching the street where the average person thinks. Meanwhile there are many opinion setters happy to spin fanciful cosmologies. A useful, consensus cosmology should address concepts that help citizens navigate the implications of survival metaphysics.

After reading the winning essays, my sense is that parapsychology is no longer able to help further paranormalist's search for understanding. As an engineer, I am not well-informed about how the study of mind is parsed but I speculate that the emergent field of consciousness studies would be a better fit.



Rules of Evidence--Survival

I began "Rules of Evidence –Survival" with:

As I began preparing my review the first BICS essay, it became obvious that there is some confusion about which phenomenal experience may be proof of information from survived personalities (discarnate) and which may be better explained as psychic access of information from incarnate personalities. As a general statement, personal stories, compilation of case studies and interviews are informative but not necessarily evidence of survival unless they include an account of possible mechanism or processes that make them evidential. "I had a veridical dream," "spirit told me" or "how could such a complex event be explained otherwise" are not, by themselves, evidential arguments.

The "Rules of Evidence" article represents my wish list for a successful theory of survival. I think key to all of this is understanding the implications of survival. If we are talking about the continuation of self-aware, sentient consciousness after bodily death, the implications are that there is a place in which we survive, there is probably a purpose for entering into a human experience, and I think most overlooked, our human avatar is likely sentient in some similar sense that we are sentient.

It is in examining the implications of fundamental concepts that we will find ways to improve our living. For instance, if our human is a complete lifeform, we can expect that it has a sense of self that probably has an influence on our thinking. Our human's instincts would be of little use for a relatively long-lived symbiotic personality, but they are clearly integral to the behavior of a biological organism.

Having determined that some part of our thinking is influenced by the unconscious urge for gene dominance, we can begin to look for the difference in behavior between choices mostly influenced by our discerning intellect and those made by our animal aspect. By doing so, we can begin our journey toward greater discerning intellect.

Morphogenic Mind

In the two-mind model, the avatar's mind is typically thought of as the **body mind**. Consider Rupert Sheldrake's [Hypothesis of Formative Causation](#). In that, Sheldrake proposed that the intelligence guiding the formation of the biological organism (morphogenesis) is a thoughtform he referred to as "Nature's Habit."

If the two mind model is correct, it is useful to have words we can use to distinguish one mind from the other. I find "body mind" is a little awkward. An alternative that I think is more correct is "morphogenic mind."

Our primary sense of self is modeled as a life form that is native to the etheric and only tenuously entangled with our human. While our human's sense of self is modeled here as secondary or overshadowed by our primary self, its survival instincts are initially dominant in our worldview. It is our worldview that governs our conscious perception.

Thank You

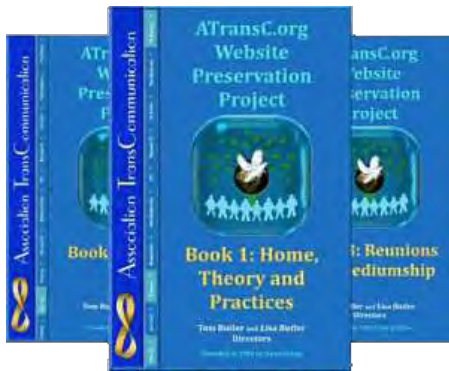
Thank you for taking time to read this Update. I work alone on these essays and receive little feedback that might help me understand if I am providing a service or making a nuisance of myself. There are 375 of you on my Mail Chimp list, so writing these updates gives me a sense that I might be of a little service.

Tom Butler

ATransC.org

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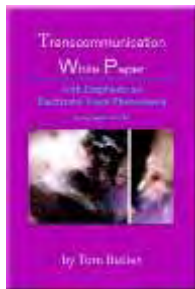
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ATransC.org Website Preservation Project

These books are a set containing the Association TransCommunication website pages. The set has been compiled to preserve website contents to help assure that future paranormalists will have access to the material. The website includes study and research reports, examples of ITC, techniques for collecting ITC, Best Practices and personal stories about ITC-related reunions. ATransC.org will continue to be available to the public, but will be discontinued when the Directors are no longer able to maintain the pages.

[Exclusively on Amazon](#)



Transcommunication White Paper with Emphasis on Electronic Voice Phenomena (EVP)

The *Transcommunication White Paper* is intended to document what is currently known by the ATransC directors about transcommunication. It includes background information about theory, concepts and techniques that are important for the understanding of phenomena related to EVP-ITC, psychic and mediumistic phenomena.

Please note that there is a version of this paper, including a free downloadable PDF, at atransc.org.

I refer people to the *Transcommunication White Paper* five or six times a week. When I do so, I always wish I had the opportunity to explain the importance of personal development.

The three most important points I would make about personal development are concerned with how we think, the effect of how we think on what we experience and how to apply that knowledge toward becoming more self-aware. See [the web page](#).

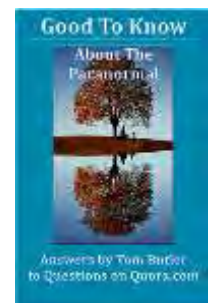
This little book includes all of that. [The book is exclusively available on Amazon](#)

Good to Know About the Paranormal

Many of you know that I have spent a lot of time answering questions about things paranormal on Quora.com. The first was the 2017 question: "How accurate is EVP recordings?"

I have been answering the questions because most of the other answers are simply wrong, anti-paranormal or misleading. Our community is still developing a culture that supports free discovery and meaningful sharing of ideas. It has been my vision that my answers might somehow aid in developing that culture.

As it turns out, I have answered quite a lot of Quora.com questions. I have compiled 240 of my answers into this book. See [the web page](#). The book is exclusively available on [Amazon](#)



Your Immortal Self, exploring the mindful way



More time became available for me to write after we changed the ATransC away from a member-supported organization. I am a theoretician by nature and speaking as a mystic, I see a world of patterns in the play of concepts, rather than as a “nuts and bolts” world.

It has been natural for me to see ITC as a pattern of interacting concepts. Again, as a mystic, it is as if the pattern is a self-organizing model in my mind’s eye that shows me how one phenomenon relates/compares to another.

In my mind, the most important aspect of these phenomena is the way we are part of the dance ... not as humans, but as immortal personalities. It has been through ITC, especially EVP, that I have come to see our actual nature as a conduit for the formation of the speech and images of ITC in our physical devices.

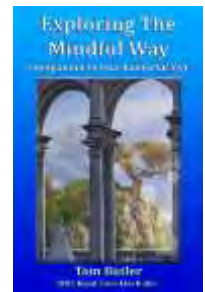
Your Immortal Self represents an effort to explain our relationship with these phenomena, the nature of our actual self and how we might learn to be better ITC practitioners by being more successful seekers. The book begins with a comprehensive effort to define the Survival Hypothesis and establish verifiable proof.

For a small fee, the PDF version of this book is available on the [Lulu website](#). I like PDF for this book because it has so many internal links. It is easier to study using a PDF file. See [the web page](#). [On Amazon](#)

Exploring the Mindful Way

I have been told that *Your Immortal Self* is a difficult read. While I understand some of the concepts can be obscure, I wrote this in *Your Immortal Self*:

Not trying to understand this material because it is too complicated is unacceptable. There is an old Zen Buddhist saying: “Before enlightenment chop wood – carry water, after enlightenment chop wood – carry water.” One must do the work to understand. One must do the work to continue learning. Study the material and do not expect to understand all of it with one reading. Contemplate your worldview. Ask questions. Argue!



I write today to find ways to illustrate the principles described in *Your Immortal Self*, as they apply to particular situations. In doing so, I hoped to make the principles more approachable and help pave the way to spiritual maturity for my readers. *Exploring the Mindful Way* is a compilation of 21 such essays. See [the web page](#). [On Amazon](#)