

Investigating the Multidimensional Nature of Body Image, Sensorial Representation, and Phenomenology in Relation to Different Forms of Out-of-Body Experience

Results:

Previous work (inc. project 124/02) has shown that people reporting 'out-of-body' experiences (OBEs) score higher on measures of dissociation & body dissatisfaction, lower on a measure of physical self-presentation confidence, and differ in regards to the perceptual experience of their body than non-OBEs. These findings have been interpreted as supporting a dissociational theory of the OBE. However, that research did not distinguish between those who had had a spontaneous OBE, an OBE as part of a near-death experience (NDE), or other OBE forms. That was the focus of this project.

2,029 participants (1,067 M's & 962 F's, mean age 36.1, SD=13.4) completed an on-line survey exploring various aspects of bodily experience, such as: somatoform dissociation, physical self-efficacy & body satisfaction. 1,110 reported having an OBE (560 M's, 550 F's, mean age 38.6, SD=13.4).

Six types of OBE were observed: Spontaneous (n=355), meditatively induced (n=89), alcohol (n=6) & drug related (n=39), whilst physically threatened (n=32) & as part of an NDE (n=54). 535 (48.6%) OBEs reported having more than 1 of these types of OBE.

Broad differences between OBEs & non-OBEs were investigated using Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) & Discriminate Function Analysis (DFA) statistics. MANOVA found sig. diff. for all DVs (analysed in two groups): Group 1: $F(11, 1925) = 90.98, p < 0.001$, & Group 2: $F(16, 1894) = 66.86, p < 0.001$.

DFA found one discriminant function which maximally separated the OBEs from non-OBEs: Group 1: chi-square (11) = 807.74, $p < 0.001$. & Group 2: chi-square (16) = 851.22, $p < 0.001$. The best predictors for distinguishing between OBEs & non-OBEs were the Experience, Belief and Ability sub-scales on the Anomalous Experience Inventory.

Published Work:

1. Murray, C.D., Fox, J. and Wilde, D. (2005) Self-concept and body investment in out-of-body experients. Proceedings of the Parapsychological Association, 48th Annual Convention. Pp.231-235.
2. Murray, C.D. Fox, J. and Wilde, D. (2005) Do out-of-body experients have better visual imagery skills than non-experients? 29th International Conference of the Society for Psychical Research, Pp. 20-21.
3. Murray, C.D. and Fox, J (2006) Differences in body image between people reporting near-death and spontaneous out-of-body-experiences. Journal of the Society for Psychical Research, 70(2), 98-109.

4. Murray, C.D., Wilde, D. and Fox, J. (2006) Self-concept and body investment in out-of-body experients. European Journal of Parapsychology, 21(1), 27-37.
5. Murray, C.D., Fox, J. and Wilde, D. (2006) The relationship between belief in the paranormal and performance on a visual imagery task: Do out-of-body experients have better visual imagery skills than non-experients? Journal of the Society for Psychical Research, 70(3), 170-176.
6. Wilde, D., Murray, C.D. and Fox, J. (2006) Do out-of-body experients have better visual imagery skills than non-experients? Parapsychological Association Convention 2006. Stockholm, Sweden. August 4-6, 2006. Pp.349-354.
7. Murray, C.D. (in press) Developing a dissociational account of the out-of-body experience. In M. Smith (Ed.) *Developing Perspectives on Anomalous Experience*. McFarland & Co Inc.
8. Murray, C.D. (Ed.) (in press) *Psychological Scientific Perspectives on Out-of-Body and Near-Death Experiences*. Nova Science Publishers, New York.

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