

Review of: "What is it like to be Out-of-Body? Phenomenal accounts of experiencers"

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The article is about a phenomenological investigation into out-of-body experiences (n=13) and offers an interesting analysis of extended reports of OBEs. I commend the authors on researching such an interesting, controversial, and important phenomenon and hope they will do further investigation on such topics. Investigating the phenomenology of OBEs with more precision is an important research topic. However, this version seems to be a relatively early draft and is a bit hard to review at this stage. The article would benefit from extended elaboration in all parts and further structural changes so I have focused this review on these aspects. That being said as I find the topic highly interesting and important question of research, I would be very glad to review the next iterations in more depth. I would also suggest to re-edit the article or use a language editing service, because there are quite a lot of stylistic, spelling and grammatical errors. Just to mention, some of the comments that I've made were about the previous version (posted on Nov 10th), but I've kept them in here for reference. The newer (Nov 25th) version has already addressed some of the issues I will mention.

Firstly, while the structure itself (abstract, introduction, results, discussion and conclusion) is suitable, the parts themselves could be more structured. The abstract is a bit too specific and could focus significantly more on prior studies done on OBEs. Essentially, the abstract currently seems like just an overview of results but it should contain more information about OBEs, about existing scientific discussion on OBEs, a general background of the topic and the studies relevance to current scientific discussion. Also it should have a brief description or definition for the term OBE. "All information was grouped according to the following topics: consciousness status, self-boundaries, object perception, color perception, other types of perceptions, interactions with other people or beings, emotions, and time and movement perception." This should probably be in the results or discussion section. It essentially says the same thing as the last paragraph of the abstract, but the last paragraph is structured in a more suitable way for an abstract.

The introduction is generally fine, but would benefit from more precision and depth in discussing the background of the topic. A more elaborate overview of current studies and a more elaborate explanation on why the phenomenological investigation of OBEs is important (e.g. it's value in trying to understand consciousness and its related processes, how it relates to different theories/philosophical stances of consciousness or other altered states of consciousness) would strongly benefit the article.

"[...] it is necessary to know more about how out-of-body experiencers (OBErs) perceive and know during such experiences" – I'd suggest to avoid using OBErs, it sounds a bit clunky. Maybe write "[...] more about the phenomenology of OBEs."

The methods part could have more detail about the research process. The author's mention that they searched "all possible extensive reports". I would suggest to make a list of the all the works that were considered for inclusion in this analysis. Additionally, it would be useful to have a description about how the thematic grouping was decided upon and how the statements were divided into the groups (e.g. were there multiple readers who separately grouped them and then discussed their differences).

I feel that the results section would benefit from a slight introduction or explanation about each theme. Also the formatting of quotes could maybe stand out more from other text. Maybe also make a numerical analysis about how many reports included statements from this theme.

The discussion section could open the different themes up quite a lot more. Many of the ideas mentioned here are very interesting and important, but would benefit from a deeper analysis. Also, the discussion section could have a paragraph about limitations. I'd also be interested to hear about differences between hypnotic, spontaneous, pharmacologically induced and self-induced OBEs.

"It seems that the exchange of information is based only on telepathic means without using language." While I stress the importance of remaining truly agnostic and open to different potential explanations at the current state of our knowledge about consciousness etc, this claim without any further explanation and elaboration isn't very convincing. I'd be very interested to hear a deeper explanation about such ideas from the authors. Also, I would like to hear what the authors think about Winkelman's (Journal of Psychedelic Studies 2(1), pp. 5–23 (2018) DOI: 10.1556/2054.2018.002) ideas about entities being experiences of innate cognitive modules and I think this idea should at least be mentioned with regards to this discussion.

In conclusion, the research seems important and very interesting, but the article would benefit considerably from additional explanation and elaboration.