

Marina Weiler

Marina Weiler is a Brazilian neuroscientist who studies anomalous experiences in terms of neuroscience.

Career

Marina Weiler is an assistant professor at the [University of Virginia's Division of Perceptual Studies \(DOPS\)](#). She holds a PhD from UNICAMP focusing on Alzheimer's brain biomarkers and has carried out postdoctoral work at NIH/NIA and UCLA studying neural consciousness.

Her current research examines anomalous phenomena such as veridical out-of-body experiences, mediumship and remote viewing, using empirical methodologies to explore whether subjective anomalies suggest consciousness dissociation from the brain through empirical methodologies.

Weiler writes a column titled Beyond the Ordinary in *Psychology Today*, describing consciousness research to non-specialist audiences.

BICS Essay Competition

In 2021 Weiler, along with co-authors Alexandre Caroli Rocha and Raphael Fernandes Casseb, submitted an essay in a [competition on afterlife evidence](#) held by the Bigelow Institute. The essay examined [Francisco Xavier](#), a Brazilian medium who died in 2002 leaving a substantial archive of books and letters that, they argue, provides persuasive evidence for the persistence of consciousness after physical death. In reaching this conclusion they assess four potential explanations (conscious fraud, unconscious fraud, super-psi function, and mind survival), going on to analyse Xavier's limited educational background, his lack of access to the specialized knowledge contained in his writings, and the verifiable personal details contained in his letters, some of which was considered as evidence in legal proceedings).¹

Out of Body Experiences

A major part of Weiler's research is dedicated to out of body experiences, attempting to understand the phenomenology and seeking to demonstrate veridical perception within a laboratory environment.

Empathetic Relationship

In a 2024 publication, Weiler and coauthors explored how out-of-body experiences (OBEs) potentially enhance empathy and prosocial behaviour. The authors propose that OBEs foster empathy through ego dissolution, creating a profound sense of interconnectedness with others. This mechanism parallels the effects observed with certain psychedelic substances. The temporoparietal junction and Default Mode

Network (DMN) are identified as potential neural correlates underlying this relationship.²

Implications for the Mind-Body Relationship

In A 2024 publication, Weiler and Acunzo critically evaluate what out-of-body experiences (OBEs) may reveal about the mind-brain relationship. They present four frameworks:

- hallucinations produced by neural processes
- evidence for non-local consciousness
- evidence that consciousness functions independently of the brain
- evidence that consciousness survives beyond brain death

Their comprehensive analysis covers neurobiological explanations, experimental studies testing non-local perception during OBEs, and striking case reports of blind individuals and clinical settings during compromised brain function. They draw attention to the paucity of neurobiological explanations that account for verified reports of accurate perceptions during OBEs.³

Eye-movements

In a 2025 publication Weiler and colleagues investigated a novel methodology for studying out-of-body experiences. Working with three participants trained to self-induce OBEs, they tested whether voluntary horizontal eye movements could serve as time markers for OBE onset. This approach adapts a technique previously used in lucid dream research. Only one participant consistently succeeded in self-inducing OBEs, performing the instructed right-left-right-left eye movement pattern at the onset of disembodiment, which was confirmed by electrooculography (EOG) recordings. The authors identified environmental factors critical for facilitating OBEs, including quiet, dim lighting, and minimal clutter.⁴

Michael Duggan

Literature

Rocha, A.C., Casseb, R.F., Weiler, M. (2021). [Mediumship as the Best Evidence for the Afterlife: Francisco Candido Xavier, a White Crow.](#) In *Winning Essays. Proof of Survival of Human Consciousness Beyond Permanent Bodily Death* (vol. 3), ed. by Bigelow Institute for Consciousness Studies (BICS). Las Vegas: BICS.

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Weiler, M., Acunzo, D.J., Cozzolino, P.J., Greyson, B. (2024). [Exploring the transformative potential of out-of-body experiences: A pathway to enhanced empathy.](#) *Neuroscience and Biobehavioral Reviews* 163, 105764,

Weiler, M., Casseb, R.F., & Acunzo, D.J. (2025). [Using eye movements to signal the onset of self-induced out-of-body experiences \(OBEs\).](#) *Journal of Consciousness*

Studies 32/3-4, 135-49.

Endnotes

Footnotes

- [1.](#) Rocha et al (2021).
- [2.](#) Weiler et al (2024).
- [3.](#) Weiler & Acunzo (2024).
- [4.](#) Weiler et al (2025).

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