



**ESSAY  
BOOK REVIEW**

## On Subtle Bodies, Out-of-Body Experiences, and Apparitions of the Living: A Review of Ernesto Bozzano's Study of "Bilocation"

Reviewed by

Carlos S. Alvarado

Massimo Biondi

[mbiondi10@libero.it](mailto:mbiondi10@libero.it)

### *La Bilocazione: Sdoppiamenti, Viaggi Astrali, Esperienze Extracorporee* by Ernesto Bozzano

*Due to untimely death of Carlos S. Alvarado, this review has been revised by Massimo Biondi, who tried to express, to the best of his knowledge, the thought of the author. It is for this reason that it was decided to maintain the author's voice in first person, as it was originally. Also, thanks are due to Nancy L. Zingrone, who has not only greatly improved the text, but has helpfully supervised the revision of this review.*



Golem Libri, 2019. 166 pp. €13. ISBN  
978-88-98776-15-3

<https://doi.org/10.31275/20221951>

For many years there have been phenomena such as apparitions of the living, photographs of the living at a distance, near-death experiences, emanations from the dying of light, fog, or incorporeal "doubles," which have suggested the existence of a spirit, or "subtle body," able to separate itself from the physical body, sometimes bringing consciousness with it. This idea also underpins the projection model for Out-of-Body Experience (OBE) cases, which has an interesting history (Alvarado, 2009, 2011, 2019). Here I briefly review that concept through the analysis of a work written by the Italian student of psychic phenomena Ernesto Bozzano, published for the first time in 1934 and recently re-edited in the original language by Golem Libri, a young publishing house specializing in "psychic" topics.

In discussing this book my approach is mainly historical. I hope both to help modern readers to get more acquainted with Bozzano's work, and to highlight those passages that deepen our understanding of specific aspects of the topic, especially with reference to the ideas on OBEs published before the 1930s. I am convinced that while the issues discussed by Bozzano have a limited value today, they can stimulate further discussions.

**PLATINUM OPEN ACCESS**



Creative Commons License 4.0  
CC-BY-NC. Attribution required  
No commercial use

### **ON SUBTLE BODIES AND DEATH**

Bozzano's work is part of an ancient tradition of beliefs in "subtle bodies," i.e., non-material bodies, housed within the physical ones (Mead, 1919; Poortman, 1954/1978). The literature on the "double"—a term used by some during the 19th century to designate that principle, as well as to refer to apparitions of the living (Shirley, n.d., circa 1938)—grew in many occult circles,<sup>1</sup> and was particularly rich among spiritualists, as shown by the writings of Emma Hardinge Britten (1875), Gabriel Delanne (1899/1904), William Stainton Moses (1876–1877), and Ernesto Volpi (1890).

In his book *Posthumous Humanity*, French linguist Adolphe D'Assier (1883/1887) presented detailed remarks about the nature of the subtle body. Similar ideas were provided



by Charles Lancelin (1925) and Sylvan J. Muldoon (Muldoon & Carrington, 1929), both of whom experienced recurrent OBEs. For some, such as theosophist Annie Besant (1896), the issue was that of the nature of the alleged many subtle bodies, which led psychic researcher Hereward Carrington to state: “Theosophists distinguish between . . . various bodies; psychic students strive, for the most part, only to prove the objective existence of any one of them” (Carrington, 1915, p. 40).

In a little-known multipart article, William Stainton Moses (1876–1877) discussed many cases of apparitions of the living and OBEs, which he explained by referring to the “trans-corporeal action of the spirit.” Moses, like many others from antiquity (Long, 2019), and like Bozzano, saw death as related to the permanent projection of the spirit from the physical body. While apparitions of the living were but temporary excursions (Figure 1), Moses (1876–1877) wrote, the location of consciousness outside the body could become permanent:

Every experiment, every observation, goes to confirm the grand truth round which all the theories of Spiritualism centre. “*Man is a spirit: and the change called death only transfers him to another sphere of existence.*” While on earth he can at times act independently of his body: he can communicate with those who are akin to him, but in higher stages of progression he can vindicate his birth right, and rise superior to what in his present state is possible for him. (Moses, 1876–1877, p. 441)

Traditionally, spiritualists have regarded death as a permanent separation of the spirit from the body, a process “equivalent to spiritual birth” (Peebles, 1869, p. 335).<sup>2</sup>



**Figure 1.** Artistic conception of spirit leaving the body at death (from C. Reiter, *Mortilogus*, 1508).

Clairvoyant Andrew Jackson Davis (1850, p. 162) stated the following: “The butterfly escapes its gross and rudimental body, and wings its way to the sunny bower, and is sensible of its new existence.”

Some, such as the German philosopher Carl du Prel (1899/1907), have held that the characteristics of the spirit, or double, extend to the production of physical effects.<sup>3</sup> Similarly, Alexander Aksakof stated that “extracorporeal activity can go as far as the doubling of the organism, presenting a simulacrum of oneself, which acts for a certain time, independently of its prototype, and presents incontestable attributes of corporeality” (Aksakof, 1890/1895, p. 523). Many others believed that the physical nature of what leaves the body had been experimentally proven by Albert de Rochas (1895) with tests of perception of the double by hypnotized persons, and by Hector Durville (1909) (Figure 2), who hypnotized volunteers and required their externalized ghosts to induce physical effects, obtain



**Figure 2.** French Magnetizer Hector Durville.

information, and perform different tests. Durville believed that the exteriorized double was a composite capable of further divisions: While it is close to the physical body, it is an etheric body, but when “it is far away for some time, it abandons its etheric form and leaves with the astral one” (Durville, 1922, p. 5).

Most researchers, such as those of the Society for Psychical Research (e.g., Gurney et al., 1886; Myers, 1903), were not very fond of the idea of subtle bodies, and this prompted Hereward Carrington to write (as quoted by Bozzano):

It may be asserted . . . with considerable confidence, that the evidence for the existence of some sort of an “astral body” has been constantly accumulating as the result of our psychical investigations, and that this evidence is

now very strong. It need hardly be pointed out that, if this were once definitely accepted, it would enable us to account for a large number of otherwise baffling phenomena very readily—haunted houses, apparitions seen by several persons at the same time, psychic photographs, clairvoyance, etc.; and (assuming that such a body might occasionally move or affect matter) raps, telekinesis, “poltergeists,” and other physical phenomena. In fact, once the objective existence of an astral body be postulated, a flood of light would be thrown upon psychic manifestations, both physical and mental. (Muldoon & Carrington, 1929, p. xx)

**ERNESTO BOZZANO**

Ernesto Bozzano (1862–1943) (Figure 3) was a prolific student of psychic phenomena, today often forgotten especially because most of his works have been published in Italian, French, and Spanish, and have not had a wide circulation in English-speaking countries. During his life he published many books and articles on a wide variety of psychic phenomena, such as apparitions, clairvoyance, haunted houses and poltergeists, physical and mental mediumship, phenomena of psychokinesis at the time of a distant death, premonitions, etc. His studies, consisting of analyses of representative cases of the considered phenomenon, were above all aimed at promoting the concepts of non-physicality and survival of consciousness at bodily death, and with the same goal Bozzano included numerous discussions in which he defended the spiritist positions and attacked the positivist ones of science and psychological research.

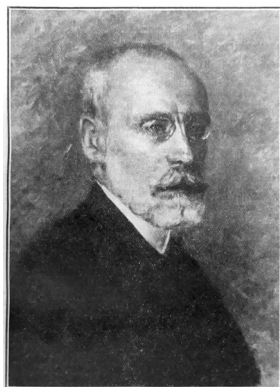


Figure 3. Ernesto Bozzano.

Bozzano was also known for his classifications of phenomena, which included the gradual modes of their manifestation. In his works, mostly monographs on one phenomenon at a time, he organized and presented many cases mainly drawn from spiritualistic and psychical publications. His systematic compilation of these cases made his work useful to those who wished to work through a poorly indexed literature. Bozzano cast his net widely, though, and the low level of proof supplied by some of his chosen examples diminished the value of his efforts.<sup>4</sup>

Bozzano was firmly convinced that the living and the

dead possessed the same powers, of a non-physical nature and independent from the material body, so the supernatural phenomena of whatever kind, both caused by the living and by disembodied agents, were, from his perspective, the source of clear and converging evidence of survival. As he (Bozzano, n.d. circa 1938) wrote:

Both are indispensable for the purpose and cannot be separated, since both are the effects of a single cause; and this cause is the human spirit, which, when it manifests in transient flashes during “incarnate” existence, determines animistic [by the living] phenomena, and when it manifests in a “discarnate” condition in the living world, determines spiritistic phenomena. (Bozzano, n.d. circa 1938, pp. viii–ix)

**BOZZANO’S LA BILOCAZIONE**

Bozzano originally published his analysis of the topic of bilocation in the Italian journal *Luce e Ombra* in a long multipart article entitled “Considerazioni ed Ipotesi sui Fenomeni di Bilocazione” (Considerations and Hypotheses about the Phenomena of Bilocation) (Bozzano, 1911b), which came out in the same year in English and French translations (Bozzano, 1911a, 1911c) (Figure 4). More than twenty years later he published *Dei Fenomeni di “Bilocazione”* (Bozzano, 1934), a longer monograph with more cases, which also appeared in French (Bozzano (1937, 1934), and is now in print in Portuguese (Bozzano, 2020/1934). Subsequently, he reviewed the topic in other works (e.g., Bozzano, n.d. circa 1938; see also Alvarado, 2005). The book that is being commented on here is a reprint of the 1934 Italian edition which includes a useful introduction by Cecilia Magnanensi, former secretary of the Biblioteca Bozzano-de Boni in Italy, as well as new footnotes with biographical information on individuals mentioned in the text.

At the beginning of the book Bozzano states that the word “bilocation” was a “term used by theologians, which summarizes the multiform manifestations called ‘fluid splitting’; a name which in turn corresponds to ‘etheric body’, ‘astral body’, ‘perispirit’ . . .” (page 17).<sup>5</sup> It is important to underscore,

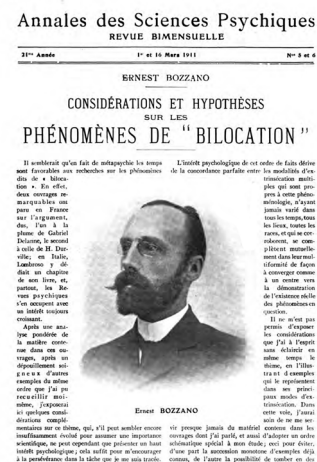


Figure 4. First page of article about bilocation in the *Annales des sciences psychiques* (1911).



however, that a similar characterization of the phenomenon came from Bozzano and did not necessarily reflect the thinking of theologians. Although some might also agree with him, most Catholic theologians used the term to solely designate the appearance of a saint in two places at once and did not dwell on speculations on etheric or astral bodies (see, for example, the classical writings of Fathers Ribet [1879, chap. 13] and Séraphin [1873, pp. 413–449]).

From a spiritualistic point of view, bilocation includes all forms of an individual's presence in two places at once: In one place with a physical, material body, and in another place—near or far from the previous one—with a non-material “double,” either subtle or etheric, i.e., made of an impalpable substance analogous to the ether which, it was believed, pervades space.

Bozzano specified his thesis in the first paragraph of his introduction:

The phenomena of “bilocation” are of decisive importance for the experimental demonstration of the existence and survival of the human spirit, because they show that within the “material body” there is an “etheric body,” which during earthly life in rare circumstances of decreased vitality (physiological sleep, hypnotic sleep, mediumistic trance, ecstasy, fainting, narcosis, coma) can temporarily leave the “material body.” Hence it follows that, if the “etheric” body is able to separate itself from the “material” one, often bringing with it consciousness, all memory and some peculiar sensory faculties, then it must be admitted that, when it will definitively separate from it at death, the spirit will continue to exist in appropriate environmental conditions. This is similar to admitting that the existence within the “material body” of an “etheric body,” and consequently of an “etheric brain,” demonstrates that the true seat of consciousness and intelligence is the “etheric body,” which is the subtle and immaterial envelope of the disembodied spirit. (p. 15)

The book consists of analyses of relevant cases, selected from various sources, and is intended to support the existence of an etheric body and survival of bodily death. To accomplish this, Bozzano classified the excerpts, according to their features, into four different groups that he believed illustrated the same basic process.

The first group consisted of feelings of completeness in amputees (the phantom limb phenomenon),<sup>6</sup> and of doubling in some of those suffering from hemiplegia. Boz-

zano criticized the physiological and scientific hypotheses proposed at the time to explain these phenomena but offered little more than a theoretical preference for the idea of an etheric body. However, in his opinion, the vague perception of having an immaterial body that did not coincide with the material one may indicate the occurrence of an “initial degree” of bilocation.

The first class is then followed by cases of autoscapy, that is, instances in which a person sees an apparition of him-/herself. This section contains five cases, one of which (p. 32) I excerpted from the original source cited by the author:

I saw . . . a figure approaching me, which, on coming near, I discovered was the double of myself, except that the figure, which wore a white dress, had a charming smile. I also wore a white dress; the figure had black on its hands, whether gloves or mittens I do not know. I had neither. It was out of doors, coming down a garden walk. On holding out my hand to it, the figure vanished. [I was] 24 years old, in robust health, and not in anxiety or grief at the time. (Sidgwick et al., 1894, p. 74)

Bozzano admitted that many autoscopic cases are pathological, but he called attention to the contemporary physical sensations, such as feeling cold or tired, to discriminate the true doublings. He attributed such sensations to the process of projecting the double and thus causing a loss of “substance.” In these experiences the consciousness is retained in the material body, but sometimes the opposite occurs. Indeed, in a case included in this group there was dual consciousness, i.e., the sensation of being in two different positions at the same time: both in the physical and in the externalized body. Experiences of this type, apparently quite rare, made him think that autoscapy is

an initial phase of the phenomena of “bilocation,” in which the consciousness is no longer bipartite, but is completely transferred, together with the intelligence and the supernormal sensory faculties, into the external “etheric body,” while the material body lies in deep sleep, or in catalepsy. (p. 37)

This brings us to the next group of 20 cases, in which consciousness was completely exteriorized, as it is reported in OBEs.<sup>7</sup> One such case, here cited from the original, was reported by physician George Wyld (1903) (Figure 5):

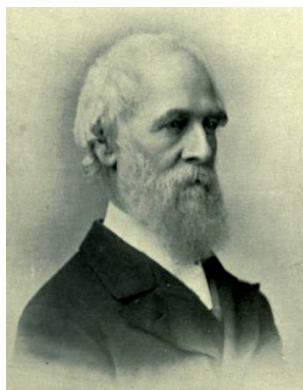


Figure 5. George Wyld.

One day in the year 1874, as I took chloroform to relieve the intense agony I was suffering from the passage of a renal calculus, I suddenly lost all pain, and as suddenly saw my 'soul-form' standing and contemplating my body as it lay motionless on the bed, about six or seven feet from where my 'spirit-form' stood. (Wyld, 1903, p. 34)<sup>8</sup>

Another case took place during the war, in a trench while the experiencer was extremely tired and in great physical discomfort:

I became conscious, acutely conscious, that I was outside myself; that the real "me"—the ego, spirit or what you like—was entirely separate and outside my fleshly body. I was looking in a wholly detached and impersonal way, upon the discomforts of a khaki-clad body, which whilst I realised that it was my own, might easily have belonged to somebody else for all the direct connection I seemed to have with it. I knew that my body must be feeling acutely cold and miserable but I, my spirit part, felt nothing . . .

In the morning H. [his companion in the trench] remarked to me upon my behaviour during the night. For a long time I had been grimly silent and then suddenly changed. My wit and humour under such trying circumstances had amazed him. I had chatted away as unconcernedly as if we had been warm and comfortable before a roaring fire—"as if there was no War on" were his exact words I remember. [The last four sentences were not cited by Bozzano.] (Two hallucinatory bilocations of the self, 1929, pp. 127–128)

Bozzano notes that the phenomenon rarely manifests under normal conditions and that, if it is so, the projections take place in "circumstances of absolute rest of the body" (p. 41). Of the 20 cases making up this group, five had occurred while the experiencer was under the effect of anesthetics, and two each while the person was hypnotized or ill. The other instances had involved either people asleep, or asphyxiated, in a coma, depressed, exhausted,

falling, injured, giving birth, smoking, doing automatic writing, or falling asleep.

Also noteworthy was the detail that when "the doubled phantom moves at a distance, truthful perceptions of distant things or situations almost always occur . . . which sometimes happens even in cases where the doubled phantom does not move away from its body" (p. 41). All of this was a strong proof in support of the objective nature of the experience.

Finally, in the last group Bozzano collected experiences in which subtle doubles of living people were seen, often without the sensation of an externalized consciousness. The following is a case (cited on pp. 94–95) concerning an apparition prior to the death of the body:

I was in my bedroom being undressed by my maid . . . when I saw, just behind her about two feet off, her exact resemblance. She was then in perfect health . . . On the following Sunday, she was only poorly. I went for a doctor at once, who said she was a little out of sorts. On Wednesday evening she suddenly died. (Myers, 1895, p. 448)

Here it is a second-hand case of an apparent long-distance visit involving a woman who would not live long (pp. 103–104):

One Sunday afternoon she expressed to her sister her great regret at never having heard her fiancé, the pastor several leagues from there, preach. She fell into catalepsy, and lay for two hours as one dead. When she awakened she told of having seen her fiancé, and of having heard him preach in such and such a way. She died the next day. After the burial, Madame Turban [the informant] asked the fiancé if on Sunday afternoon he had preached on such and such a subject. Struck by her question, and very much surprised, he asked, "How do you know that?"—"Your fiancée told me."—"It's very strange," he answered. "Just imagine—in the middle of my sermon I thought I saw a white form enter the church, which resembled my fiancée; she sat down in an empty seat in the midst of the assembly, and disappeared toward the end of the service." (Flammarion, 1921/1922, p. 123)<sup>9</sup>

Other cases, among the most interesting ones in the book, consisted of visions of lights and shapes near the bodies of dying people. According to Bozzano, these are objective findings, especially when perceived by several

witnesses, which have great theoretical value as

they represent the initial phase of the “deathbed bilocation,” in which subtle substance escapes from the “material body” and, after repeated ups and downs caused by temporary reabsorptions into the organism (related to the ups and downs of the vitality of the dying person), ends up organizing into an “etheric body.” (p. 110)<sup>10</sup>

Mists were sometimes perceived, as in two instances that Bozzano took from Sophia de Morgan’s (1863) *From Matter to Spirit* (pp. 111–112), while other ones involved lights and subtle bodies. *La Bilocazione* also includes a fascinating case observed by members of one family. The experience took place around their mother’s deathbed (pp. 117–118). The following paragraphs are a few extracts from the original report of this case.

During the afternoon we saw bright blue lights, sometimes near her and sometimes about the room. We could only see them for a second or two, and usually only one or two of us at a time . . . At dusk that afternoon, as she lay perfectly quiet, I and three sisters all at once noticed a pale blue mauve haze all over her as she lay. We watched it and very gradually it deepened in colour until it became a deep purple, so thick that it almost blotted out her features from view, and spread all in the folds of the bed-clothes like a purple fog. Once or twice she feebly moved her arms and the colour travelled with them. We thought it very wonderful, so called the two remaining sisters to see if they could see it too, and they could. At this time our sister saw a grey smoke-like object pass between two chairs; it was about three feet high and just glided away from the bed. I was sitting there, but did not see it. As we watched, very gradually patches of bright yellow light, like sunlight, appeared on the pillow; one at the left side of her head was particularly bright sometimes, and then would slowly dim and once more become bright again. Mother’s old friend was also in the room during this time, but she neither saw the purple mist around mother nor the blue lights, and said that our eyes were tired with watching and that we were over-wrought. We drew her attention to this very bright patch on the pillow and she saw it, but said it was the reflection of the fire or gaslight; we screened both, and she then went round the room and moved pictures

and photograph frames and tilted the mirror, but without making any difference to the light. At last she came and put her hands directly over it, but without shading it in any degree; after that she sat down without saying a word. Early in the evening I saw my eldest sister, and the other sister who saw the grey object before, both turn and look at the same time to the place where it had appeared, and they saw it once more; again I did not see it but they both did, and both agreed as to the description. The sister who first saw it about this time also saw a large blue globe-like light resting on mother’s head, but none of the rest of us could see it. She claimed that the inside appeared all moving and gradually it turned to deep purple and faded out.

About seven o’clock that evening mother’s lips parted and from that time we gradually saw a thick white mist collect above her head and spread across the head of the bed. It came from the top of her head, but collected more thickly to the opposite side of the bed in which she was lying. It hung like a cloud of white steam, sometimes so thick we could scarcely see the bed rails, but continually it was varying although it moved so slowly as to be scarcely perceptible. I and my five sisters were still with her, and all saw it distinctly, also my brother and one brother-in-law. The blue lights continued about the room, also in flashes of yellow, like sparks, appeared sometimes. All this time mother’s lower jaw gradually fell a little. For some hours we saw little difference except that a halo of pale yellow light rays came round her head; there were about seven in number; they varied in length from twelve to twenty inches at different times. By midnight everything had cleared off, but she did not die until 7.17 on the morning of January 2nd. (Monk, 1922)

Bozzano argued that the preceding case was beyond critique because it had occurred recently and been reported by the percipients soon after, and “all those present at the deathbed saw in an identical manner the unfolding of the phenomenon in every phase” (p. 118). These considerations led him to state that the hallucinatory hypothesis could be excluded with certainty, and that “the objective existence of the phenomenon [was] scientifically proven” (p. 119). However, he was not completely correct, as in reporting the case he omitted the first paragraph above, and therefore did not take into account that some of the relatives had feelings and perceptions that were not reported

by other relatives. The story included somewhat subjective elements and did not conclusively support the presence of an objective subtle body as Bozzano believed.<sup>11</sup>

Then, commenting on the different perceptions—vision and touch on the shoulder—experienced by two witnesses near a dying woman (p. 129), he pointed out that to induce those sensations a “fluidic form” of the woman must have appeared physically in the environment in which she was seen. A similar point was made later in the book (p. 131), when Bozzano discussed an apparition included in the *Phantasms of the Living*, in which the “presence” had been perceived by three witnesses but through differing sensory modalities. Such cases may tell us something about how the experiences depend on the sensitivities and psychological styles of the percipients, but for Bozzano “these complex and interesting manifestations suggest[ed] the presence in the place of a spiritual agency capable of recognizing specific perceptive styles of people, and of adjusting itself to signal its presence through supernormal impressions” (p. 131).

Lastly, he relates a few cases of whole-body apparitions seen around dying people (pp. 133–139). Three of those experiences had been reported by nurse Joy Snell (1918), who was said to have frequent perceptions of similar phenomena near her dying patients.

Noting that bilocation phenomena clearly imply the existence of a double, Bozzano argued that they were “the necessary complement, or better the *sine qua non* condition of the existence of a great part of metapsychic phenomena, starting with some spontaneous forms of post-mortem apparitions, and ending with the experimental phenomena of ‘materialization’” (p. 146). However, despite the relevance of the works of such authors as Albert de Rochas (1895), Hector Durville (1909), Baraduc (1908), and Moses (1875), he had to admit that science still did not accept the existence of the subtle body. But according to Bozzano it was only a matter of time, because in the end scientists would realize that materialistic explanations could not explain the phenomena; and this, consequently, would have many philosophical, social, and religious implications. He believed both the “convergence of proof” (p. 155) provided by the cases of different nature included in his classification, and the “ascending gradation of analogous phenomena, that prove to be intimately connected to each other, completing, validating, integrating, and reinforcing each other” (p. 156) would become very useful, given that they contributed to the strength of experimental evidence.

## EVALUATION OF THE BOOK

*La Bilocazione*, first published in book form in 1934, was to some extent a synthesis of previous ideas about

subtle bodies. Even if the case classification was an original contribution by the Italian scholar, the work also took up ideas of other authors (e.g., Mattiesen, 1931; Muldoon & Carrington, 1929; Volpi, 1890).

For current readers, the book still has a lot to offer. First, the emphasis on the witnesses’ experiences and their narratives point to the importance of paying attention to individual cases, and not only—as is preferred today—to collections made up of many examples. The individual cases and especially the collections allow quantitative, statistical, and demographic analyses. But detailed and deep attention to the unique stories the witnesses provide allows us to consider the features and structure of the experiences, to extract new details that are important, suggest new research avenues, and allow a gradation in the scales of specific dynamics or features. Because of Bozzano’s method, he—and those who have come after him—have been able to see that, among other things, the acquisition of information during journeys out of the body, or the cord-like connections between the physical and etheric bodies are found in some, but not all, of the experiences he considered. In addition, Bozzano brings to our attention such phenomena as apparitions of the living that have been neglected in recent times. The same can be said of the deathbed cases he included, in which individuals around the dying person see mists, lights, and subtle bodies that represent the dying person, and sometimes other spirits (Alvarado, 2006; Moody, with Perry, 2010). By bringing Bozzano’s work back to the attention of modern researcher, I hope that future investigations of new cases in which the features of the experiences also are considered will be conducted.

Another line of research that might be inspired by this new look at Bozzano’s cases and his methods is the focus on the psychological traits of those who experience and report the phenomena he covered (on the importance of these issues, see Alvarado, 2006). Furthermore, as already mentioned, this book, as happens for many of Bozzano’s publications, can be used as an index to interesting but otherwise forgotten cases, lost to today’s researcher because of the failings or outright lack of indexes available for the original documentation.

However, it should be noted that the volume has some problems. One of these is the varying level of evidence in the included cases. Bozzano extracted texts from sources with less-than-optimal reliability and, although he took some of them from the SPR, he did not comment on the methods by which corroborating evidence were gathered, if at all. In the treatment of the Monk case, for example, Bozzano did not seem interested in the detailed testimony of all the individuals involved in collective cases. That he seemed to take summaries of one person’s experiences as



told by another person at face value was certainly as problematic then as it is now.

The evidential status of the experience narratives is also relevant for the explanations Bozzano proposes. There is no doubt that there are similarities between the cases, and that some of them, such as OBEs and deathbed experiences, suggest that something is leaving the body. But the evidence does not seem so strong or persuasive to be as sure as Bozzano was that the phenomena proved an etheric body produced the phenomena. The reader's discomfort with Bozzano's conclusions increases when it becomes clear that while Bozzano expressed his ideas in very definitive terms, he also dismissed or ignored criticisms or counterarguments from other scholars.

Finally, I find it strange that Bozzano did not deal with other issues relevant to his argument. He mentioned some characteristics of the OBEs, but he could have said much more on topics such as the places visited by the experiencers, the descriptions of their OB bodies, and the varieties of their sensory experiences. The book also lacks discussions on the possible differences between occasional and recurrent OBEs (e.g., Muldoon & Carrington, 1929; Turvey, n.d. circa 1911), and on the disparate doctrines of the subtle body and the etheric brain by other authors (e.g., respectively, Besant, 1896; Leadbeater, 1895). Bozzano overlooked intentionally produced apparitions and so-called "arrival apparitions" (Vardøger cases), in which a person is seen or heard in a place where the individual has not, in fact, arrived.<sup>12</sup> My impression is that because he was concerned primarily with proving the existence of the etheric body, he showed little interest in highlighting varieties and commonalities of the phenomena.

Today the issue of subtle and etheric bodies is unpopular in scientific circles (for one exception see Tressoldi et al., 2015) and among members of the parapsychological community, some of whom simply state that "jury remains out . . . on the *physical* reality of subtle bodies" (Kelly, 2015, p. 509), that those phenomena may have hyperspatial dimensions (Carr, 2015), or that they are veridical hallucinations (Braude, 2003). However, Bozzano's book underscores that it is possible that a continuum exists between such phenomena as apparitions of living, OBEs, and deathbed observations, as others have commented (Nahm, 2011). His study also reminds us that the current tendency to define such experiences as hallucinatory by emphasizing psychological and neurological explanations does not clarify everything that occurs in nature. It is my belief that *La Bilocazione* is undoubtedly worthy of being read and that the useful points that Bozzano has raised should be taken into consideration.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> An important example are the writings of theosophists (e.g., Besant, 1896; see also Deveney's 1997 study). A theosophist referred to various vehicles, or bodies, of which the physical body was one:

It might be said that there exist around us a series of worlds one within the other (by interpenetration), and that man possesses a body for each of these worlds by means of which he may observe it and live in it. (Leadbeater, 1902, p. 35)

Others, such as French occultist Charles Lancelin (1925), believed in the existence of various bodies as well.

<sup>2</sup> One author referred to a "double . . . which can separate from . . . and act as the natural or material body, united however by an electrical cord, the sundering of which would produce the death of the physical body" (Watson, 1876, p. 187). English psychical researcher Frederic W. H. Myers (1903) wrote that "self-projection . . . is the one definite act which it seems as though a man might perform equally well before and after bodily death" (Vol. 1, p. 297). Many later writers also related OBEs to survival of death (e.g., Mattiesen, 1931; Muldoon & Carrington, 1951). In addition, various authors presented observations of emanations (mist, lights, subtle bodies) from dying persons (e.g., Davis, 1850; De Morgan, 1863; Monk, 1922), a topic discussed by Bozzano in his book.

<sup>3</sup> Referring to this principle, one writer wrote about "the existence of a special state of dynamism outside the human organism" (Volpi, 1890, p. 318). Some speculated that medium's doubles were the basis of some séance materializations (e.g., Coleman, 1865, p. 127). Regarding the famous spirit materialization Katie King, it was stated that she was "not an independent spirit, but the spirit, or 'double' of the medium . . ." (Spirit forms, 1873, p. 452). The topic continued to be discussed in later years (e.g., Fodor, 1934).

<sup>4</sup> For references and details about Bozzano's life and work, see Alvarado (2016), Gasperini (2012), Iannuzzo (1983), and Ravalchini (1993). Some works that well represent Bozzano's approach and beliefs are his essays about death-related phenomena, his critique of a book by René Sudre, and his general discussion of issues related to survival of death (see, respectively, Bozzano, 1923, 1926, n.d. circa 1938).

<sup>5</sup> Some early comments about the perispirit were published by Kardec (1860, pp. XV, 38–39, 59). Summarizing communications received from mediums, this author stated that the perispirit provided a link between the spirit and the physical body. Its force "is drawn from the



surrounding environment, from the universal fluid; it holds at the same time electricity, magnetic fluid, and, up to a certain point, inert matter" (p. 119). It would also be involved with organic processes, and with psychic phenomena, but it would not carry consciousness with it. Later discussions, also informed from spirit communications, related the concept to the unconscious, to memories, and to human morphology (Delanne, 1897).

<sup>6</sup> On discussions about phantom limbs consistent with Bozzano's, see D'Assier (1883/1887, pp. 103–104) and Bouvery (1897, pp. 44–47). Justinus Kerner (1829/1845) stated that when Friederike Hauffe, the famous Seeress of Prevoist, "saw people who had lost a limb, she still saw the limb attached to the body; that is, she saw the nerve-projected-form of the limb . . ." (p. 77).

<sup>7</sup> He was only presenting a few examples of published cases. Many others can be found in the literature, such as a complex case reported by the medium D. D. Home (1864, pp. 44–47), the reports of recurrent experiences (e.g., Muldoon & Carrington, 1929; Turvey, n.d. circa 1911), and various other cases (e.g., Dubet, 1894; London Dialectical Society, 1871, pp. 162–163; Wiltse, 1889).

<sup>8</sup> Wyld (1895) wrote to the British medical journal *Lancet*, mentioning his experience and arguing that because anesthetics were widely used there should be many cases like his experience. He had already commented on the use of anesthetics to prove the existence of the soul, and cited experiences of others that supported his ideas (Wyld, 1880, Chapter 7).

<sup>9</sup> Another even more interesting case cited in the book (pp. 104–109) was one reported by William T. Stead (1896) of a Mrs. A, seen by Stead and others in a church service while she was ill at home. In his explanation for the fact that the lady was wearing garments appropriate to the occasion rather than what she would have been wearing in her sick room, Bozzano asserted that "thought is a plasticizing and organizing force" (p. 109) and assumed that the lady thought of herself as wearing proper attire for the environment in which she was seen. Later in the book the author commented (p. 145) on Wiltse's (1889) classic experience of leaving his body, pointing out that when he realized he was out of his body naked and in front of ladies, he felt embarrassed and soon after found himself clothed. Bozzano (1926–1927) also discussed the power of thought in a different study.

<sup>10</sup> This is consistent with the idea that the perispirit separates from the physical body at death gradually, "and as long as the disturbance lasts, it retains a certain affinity with the body" (Le lien de l'esprit et du corps, 1859, p. 128). See also Lancelin (n.d., pp. 15–16).

<sup>11</sup> Gurney et al. (1886, Vol. 2, pp. 221–223, 237–238, 619–

622) have discussed selective percipience (see also Alvarado, 2006, pp. 146–147). For another selective deathbed case, see 'Hallucinations experienced in connection with dying persons' (1908, pp. 309–310).

<sup>12</sup> Interestingly, most of the reports of these cases, as well as of apparitions of the living happening during crises, do not include descriptions of the experience of being out of the body.

## REFERENCES

- Aksakof, A. (1895). *Animisme et Spiritisme: Essai d'un examen critique des phénomènes médiumniques, spécialement en rapport avec les hypothèses de la "force nerveuse", de l'"hallucination" et de l'"inconscient" comme réponse à l'ouvrage du dr. Ed. von Hartmann, intitulé "Le Spiritisme" [Animism and Spiritism: Essay of a critical examination of mediumistic phenomena, especially in relation to the hypotheses of "nervous force", "hallucination," and the "unconscious" as a reply to the work of Dr. Ed. Von Hartmann entitled "Spiritism"]*. P.-G. Leymarie. (Original work published in German 1890)
- Alvarado, C. S. (2005). Ernesto Bozzano on the phenomena of bilocation. *Journal of Near-Death Studies*, 23(4), 207–238. <https://doi.org/10.17514/jnds-2005-23-4-p207-238>
- Alvarado, C. S. (2006). Neglected near-death phenomena. *Journal of Near-Death Studies*, 24(3), 131–151. <https://doi.org/10.17514/jnds-2006-24-3-p131-151>
- Alvarado, C. S. (2009). The spirit in out-of-body experiences: Historical and conceptual notes. In *Spirituality, science and the paranormal* (pp. 3–19). Academy of Spirituality and Paranormal Studies.
- Alvarado, C. S. (2011). On doubles and excursions from the physical body, 1876–1956. *Journal of Scientific Exploration*, 25(3), 563–580.
- Alvarado, C. S. (2016). Ernesto Bozzano. In R. McLuhan (Ed.), *Psi encyclopedia*. Society for Psychical Research. <http://psi-encyclopedia.spr.ac.uk/articles/ernesto-bozzano>
- Alvarado, C. S. (2019). Does something leave the body? (OBE historical perspectives). In R. McLuhan (Ed.), *Psi encyclopedia*. Society for Psychical Research. <https://psi-encyclopedia.spr.ac.uk/articles/does-something-leave-body-obe-historical-perspectives>
- Baraduc, H. (1908). *Mes morts: Leurs manifestations, leurs influences, leurs télépathies [My dead: Their manifestations, their influences, their telepathy]*. P. Leymarie.
- Besant, A. (1896). *Man and his bodies* (Theosophical Manuals No. 7). Theosophical Publishing House.
- Bouvery, J. (1897). *Le spiritisme et l'anarchie devant la science et la philosophie [Spiritism and anarchy in front of science and philosophy]*. Chamuel.
- Bozzano, E. (1911a). Considerations et hypothèses sur les phénomènes de "bilocation" [Considerations and hypotheses about the phenomena of "bilocation"].

- Annales des sciences psychiques*, 21, (5, 6), 65–72, (7, 8), 109–116, (9, 10), 143–152, (11, 12), 166–172.
- Bozzano, E. (1911b). Considerazioni ed ipotesi sui fenomeni di bilocazione [Considerations and hypotheses about the phenomena of bilocation]. *Luce e Ombra*, 11(2), 57–70, (4), 173–186, (5), 234–246, (6, 7), 273–294.
- Bozzano, E. (1911c). The hypothesis of ‘bilocation’ considered. *Light*, 31(1584), 231, (1586), 255–256, (1588), 281, (1589), 293, (1590), 308–309, (1591), 314–315, (1592), 326–327, (1593), 340, (1594), 356–357, (1595), 363, (1597), 391–392, (1598), 399, (1599), 413, (1600), 424.
- Bozzano, E. (1923). *Phénomènes psychiques au moment de la mort* [Psychic phenomena at the moment of death]. Editions de la B. P. S.
- Bozzano, E. (1926). *À propos de l’introduction à la métapsychique humaine* [Regarding the introduction to human metapsychics]. Jean Meyer.
- Bozzano, E. (1926–1927). Pensiero e volontà: Forze plasticizzante e organizzanti [Thought and will: Plasticizing and organizing forces]. *Luce e Ombra*, 26(11), 481–488, (12)556–563; 27(1), 34–44, (2–3)60–69, (4)164–175, (5)223–230, (6)250–262.
- Bozzano, E. (1934). *Dei fenomeni di “bilocazione”* [The phenomena of “bilocation”], 2nd ed.. Città della Pieve.
- Bozzano, E. (1937). *Les phénomènes de bilocation* [The phenomena of bilocation]. Jean Meyer. (Original work published 1934)
- Bozzano, E. (2020). *Fenômenos de bilocação (desdobramento)* [Bilocation phenomena (doubling)]. Correo Fraterno. [Original work published in Italian in 1934]
- Bozzano, E. (n.d., circa 1938). *Discarnate influence in human life: A review of the case for spirit intervention*. International Institute for Psychical Research/John M. Watkins.
- Braude, S. B. (2003). *Immortal remains: The evidence for life after death*. Rowman and Littlefield.
- Britten, E. H. (1875, May 20). The doctrine of re-incarnation. *The Spiritual Scientist*, 2(11), 128–129. Part 2 in May 27, 1875, issue, 2(12), 140–141
- Carr, B. (2015). Hyperspatial models of matter and mind. In E. F. Kelly, A. Crabtree, & P. Marshall (Eds.), *Beyond physicalism: Toward reconciliation of science and spirituality* (pp. 227–273). Rowman & Littlefield.
- Carrington, H. (1915). *True ghosts stories*. J. S. Ogilvie.
- Coleman, B. (1865). Passing events—The spread of Spiritualism. *Spiritual Magazine*, 6(3), 110–128.
- D’Assier, A. (1887). *Posthumous humanity: A study of phantoms*. George Redway. [Originally work published in French in 1883]
- Davis, A. J. (1850). *The great harmonia; Being a philosophical revelation of the natural, spiritual, and celestial universe* (Vol. 1). J. S. Redfield.
- Delanne, G. (1897). *L’évolution animique: Essais de psychologie physiologique suivant le spiritisme* [Animic evolution: Essays of physiological psychology according to spiritism]. Chamuel.
- Delanne, G. (1899). *L’Ame est immortelle* [Soul lives forever]. Chamouelle. [English edition: *Evidence for a future life*, Welby, 1904]
- [De Morgan, S.]. (1863). *From matter to spirit: The result of ten years’ experience in spirit manifestations*. Longman, Green, Longman, Roberts, & Green.
- de Rochas, A. (1895). Les fantômes des vivants [Phantoms of the living]. *Annales des sciences psychiques*, 5(November–December), 257–275.
- Deveney, J. P. (1997). *Astral projection or liberation of the double and the work of the early Theosophical Society* (Theosophical History Occasional Paper, Vol. 6). Theosophical History.
- Dubet, A. (1894). Dédoublément a Chateaufort [Doubling at Chateaufort]. *Revue Spirite*, 37(10), 620–621.
- Du Prel, C. (1907). *La magie: Science naturelle: Vol. 1: La physique magique* [Magic: Natural science: Vol. 1: Magical physics]. H. Vaillant-Carmanne. [First published in German in 1899]
- Durville, H. (1909). *Le fântôme des vivants: Anatomie et physiologie de l’ame: Recherches expérimentales sur le dédoublement des corps de l’homme* [Phantoms of the living: Anatomy and physiology of the soul: Experimental research about the doubling of man’s body]. Librairie du Magnétisme.
- Durville, H. (1922). *Manifestations du fantôme des vivants: Pour dédoubler le corps humain* [Manifestations of phantoms of the living: Doubling the human body]. Henri Durville.
- Flammarion, C. (1922). *Death and its mystery: At the moment of death*. Century. [Original work published in French 1921]
- Fodor, N. (1934). Simplifying “miracles”: Theory of materialization process. *Light*, 54(2765), 10.
- Gasperini, L. (2012). Ernesto Bozzano: An Italian spiritualist and psychical researcher. *Journal of Scientific Exploration*, 25(4), 755–773.
- Gurney, E., Myers, F. W. H., & Podmore, F. (1886). *Phantasms of the Living* (2 vols). Trübner.
- Hallucinations experienced in connection with dying persons. (1908). *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research*, 13(253), 308–312.
- Home, D. D. (1864). *Incidents in my life* (2nd ed.). F. Pitman.
- Iannuzzo, G. (1983). *Ernesto Bozzano: La vita e l’opera* [Ernesto Bozzano: Life and work]. Le Monografie di Luce e Ombra, No. 2. Luce e Ombra.
- Kardec, A. (1860). *Philosophie spiritualiste: Le livre des esprits* [Spiritualist philosophy: The book of spirits] (2nd ed.). Didier.
- Kelly, E. F. (2015). Toward a worldview grounded in science and spirituality. In E. F. Kelly, A. Crabtree, & P. Marshall (Eds.), *Beyond physicalism: Toward reconciliation of science and spirituality* (pp. 493–551). Rowman & Littlefield.

- Kerner, J. (1845). *The seeress of Prevorst: Being revelations concerning the inner-life of man, and the inter-diffusion of a world of spirits in the one we inhabit*. C. Moore. [Original work published in German 1829]
- Lancelin, C. (1925). *Méthode de dédoublement personnel (extériorisation de la neuricité, sorties en astral)* [Method of personal doubling (exteriorization of neuricity, astral outings)]. Henri Durville.
- Lancelin, C. (n.d.). *Comment on meurt, comment on naît* [How we die, how we are born]. Henri Durville.
- Leadbeater, C. W. (1895). Dreams. *Lucifer*, 17(99), 229–244, (100), 273–287.
- Leadbeater, C. W. (1902). *An outline of theosophy*. Theosophical Publishing Society.
- Le lien de l'esprit et du corps [The link between the spirit and the body]. (1859, May). *Revue spirite*, 2, 127–128.
- London Dialectical Society. (1871). *Report of spiritualism, of the committee of the London Dialectical Society*. Longmans, Green, Reader and Dyer.
- Long, A. G. (2019). *Death and immortality in ancient philosophy*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781316091562>
- Mattiesen, E. (1931). Der Austritt des Ich als spiritistisches Argument [The exit of the self as a spiritualistic argument]. *Zeitschrift für Parapsychologie*, 6(9), 413–437, (10), 481–493.
- Mead, G. R. S. (1919). *The doctrine of the subtle body in Western tradition*. J. M. Watkins.
- Monk, D. (1922). The process of dying witnessed by eight persons: Visible evidences of the spirit body. *Light*, 42(2150), 182.
- Moody, R., with Perry, P. (2010). *Glimpses of eternity: Sharing a loved one's passage from this life to the next*. Guideposts.
- Moses, W. S. [under the pseudonym M. A. Oxon]. (1875, March 5). Photographing the spirit of a medium in Paris, while his body was asleep in London. *Spiritualist Newspaper*, 119.
- Moses, W. S. [under the pseudonym M. A. Oxon]. (1876–1877). On the trans-corporeal action of spirit. *Human Nature*, 10(108), 97–125, (109)145–157; 11(123), 241–264, (124)289–312, (125)337–351, (126), 385–400, (127), 433–441.
- Muldoon, S. J., & Carrington, H. (1929). *The projection of the astral body*. Rider.
- Muldoon, S. J., & Carrington, H. (1951). *The phenomena of astral projection*. Rider.
- Myers, F. W. H. (1895). The subliminal self: Chapter IX: The relation of supernormal phenomena to time—Precognition. *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research*, 11(29), 408–593.
- Myers, F. W. H. (1903). *Human personality and its survival of bodily death* (Vol. 1). Longmans, Green.
- Nahm, M. (2011). Reflections on the context of near-death experiences. *Journal of Scientific Exploration*, 25(3), 453–478.
- Peebles, J. M. (1869). *Seers of the ages: Embracing Spiritualism, past and present*. William White.
- Poortman, J. J. (1978). *Vehicles of consciousness: The concept of hylic pluralism (ochema)* (4 vols.). Theosophical Society in the Netherlands. [Original work published 1954]
- Ravaldini, S. (1993). *Ernesto Bozzano e la ricerca psichica: Vita e opere di un pioniere della parapsicologia* [Ernesto Bozzano: Life and work of a pioneer in parapsychology]. Mediterranee.
- Ribet, J. (1879). *La mystique divine distinguée des contrefaçons diaboliques et les analogies humaines: Les phénomènes mystiques* [Divine mysticism distinguished from diabolic counterfeits and human analogies: Mystical phenomena] (Vol. 2). Poussielgue.
- Séraphin, P. (1873). *Principes de théologie mystique à l'usage des confesseurs & des directeurs des âmes* [Principles of mystical theology for the use of confessors & directors of souls]. Librairie Internationale-Catholique.
- Shirley, R. (n.d. ca 1938). *The mystery of the human double*. Rider.
- Sidgwick, H., Johnson, A., Myers, F. W. H., Podmore, F., & Sidgwick, E. M. (1894). Report on the Census of Hallucinations. *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research*, 10(26), 25–422.
- Snell, J. (1918). *The ministry of angels: Here and hereafter*. G. Bell and Sons.
- Spirit forms. (1873, December 12). *Spiritualist*, 451–454.
- Stead, W. T. (1896). Two doubles I have seen. *Borderland*, 3(1), 24–36.
- Tressoldi, P., Pederzoli, L., Caini, P., Ferrini, A., Melloni, S., Prati, E., Richieldi, D., Richeldi, F. & Trabucco, A. (2015). Hypnotically induced out-of-body experience: How many bodies are there? Unexpected discoveries about the subtle body and psychic body. *SAGE Open*, 5(4), 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244015615919>
- Turvey, V. (n.d. circa 1911). *The beginnings of seership; or, super-normal mental activity*. Stead's Publishing House.
- Two hallucinatory bilocations of the self. (1929). *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research*, 25(457), 126–128.
- Volpi, E. (1890). Mémoire de M. Ernesto Volpi. In *Compte rendu du Congrès Spirite et Spiritualiste tenu à Paris du 9 au 16 septembre 1889* (pp. 317–325). Librairie Spirite.
- [Watson, S.]. (1876). The double. *American Spiritual Magazine*, 2(6), 187–188.
- Wiltse, A. S. (1889). A case of typhoid fever with subnormal temperature and pulse. *St. Louis Medical and Surgical Journal*, 57(6), 355–364.
- [Wyld, G.]. (1880). *Theosophy and the higher life; or, spiritual dynamics and the divine and miraculous man*. Trübner.
- Wyld, G. (1895). Correspondence: On certain physiological phenomena accompanying the administration of anaesthetics. *Lancet*, 1(March 23), 776.
- Wyld, G. (1903). The soul revealed by anaesthetics. *Light*, 23(1149), 776.