



SCIENCE AS AN ASSIMILATION OF THE 19TH CENTURY SPIRITUALISM INTO SOCIETY

19. Yüzyıl Ruhçuluğunun Topluma Asimilasyonu Olarak Bilim

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ABSTRACT

Spiritualists in the 19th century have endeavored to prove their assessments by using science itself which tried to debunk their field's phenomena. The most principal claims of spiritualism have been the possibility of communicating with spirits through the agency of mediums and visioning a close person who has been in the moment of dying or far away. Scientific studies have not only been used to prove these assessments but to create new concepts and perceptions about psychic experiences. The aim of this article is to determine that spiritualists have assimilated themselves into society by using science apart from being denounced as superstitious. Hereby, what spiritualists have suggested in terms of science will be documented within a historical process and the terms which they have coined will be examined. It will be clarified that the people who have evaluated these phenomena consisted of scientists, scholars and literary figures. SPR (The Society for Psychical Research), which was completely formed by scientists and scholars, investigated the mediums and put them under multiple psychical experiments. These researches were published in their anthology named as *Phantasms of The Living* and their periodicals named as "The Proceedings". The terms which were coined in order to scientificate spiritualism have been "psychic force", "telepathy", "hallucination" and "ectoplasm". It will be concluded that these terms have enabled to categorize the assessments of spiritualism which were communicating and visioning spirits, and also accommodated the psychic researchers and mediums to express themselves subjectively by assimilation into society.

Keywords: spiritualism, 19th century, psychical research, science, assimilation.

ÖZ

19. yüzyılda ruhçular bilhassa bu akımın fenomenlerini çürütmeye çabalayan bilimin kendisini kullanarak iddialarının kanıtlanması yolunda büyük çabalar sarf etmişlerdir. Ruhçuluk fenomenlerindeki en temel iddialar ruhların medyumlar aracılığıyla insanlarla iletişim kurabilmesi yahut ölmekte ya da çok uzakta olan bir yakının o esnada başka bir kişiye görünebilmeleridir. Bilimsel çalışmalar sadece ruhçuluk

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fenomenlerinin iddialarını doğrulamak adına değil, aynı zamanda toplumsal olarak psişik deneyimler üzerine yeni kavramlar ve kavrayış biçimleri de geliştirmek üzere kullanılmıştır. Bu makalenin amacı 19. yüzyıl ruhçuluğunun bilimi kullanıp batıl inançlı olarak yaftalanmaktan uzaklaşarak kendilerini topluma kabul ettirmeye çalıştıklarını belirlemektir. Bu sebeple 19. yüzyılda ruhçuluğun bilim adına ortaya attığı iddialar tarihsel bir süreçte belgelenmiş ve ortaya koydukları terimler irdelenmiştir. Bu fenomeni ele alan kişiler, dönemin önemli bilim insanları, akademisyenleri ve edebi figürleridir. Tamamen bilim insanları ve akademisyenlerden kurulan SPR (The Society for Psychical Research) geniş imkânlarıyla medyumları incelemiş, onları pek çok psişik deneylere tabi tutmuşlardır. Bu incelemeler *Phantasms of the Living* adlı antolojide ve “The Proceedings” adlı kuruluşun yayın organı tarafınca yayınlanmıştır. Ruhçuluğun bilimselleşmesi adına ortaya konan en temel terimler “psişik güç”, “telepati”, “halüsinasyon” ve “ektoplazma”dır. Bu terimlerin ele alınışıyla birlikte ruhlarla iletişim ve ruhları görme gibi iddiaların kategorileştirilebilmesinin sağlandığı sonucuna varılmıştır.

Anahtar Sözcükler: ruhçuluk, 19. yüzyıl, psişik araştırmalar, bilim, asimilasyon.

Introduction

This article has examined why science had an importance in the 19th century spiritualism. It has been mentioned that the first motive was the assimilation of spiritualists into society in order not to be recognized as a superstitious class. Moreover, the disciplinary structure of science has functioned to coin new scientific terms to determine the factuality of psychic experiences. These psychic experiences were mainly table seances which rendered communicating with spirits through the agency of a medium, visioning a dying or far away person and conjuring up the visible spirits. The methodology of this article has been the historical documentation of what spiritualists and psychic researchers have suggested scientifically in order to assimilate spiritualism into society and develop new conceptions on psychic experiences.

Spiritualists appealed to science in order to go beyond the limited facilities of the human capabilities which consider these psychic experiences as factual. SPR (The Society for Psychical Research) was formed in 1882 to investigate the psychical phenomena both for the benefit of the defender and the decliner of spiritualism. SPR managed to document the narratives of ghost sightings which depended on testimonials and witnessings. SPR collected scientific data and published them in their journals called *The Proceedings* which were published in 1882 and in *Phantasms of The Living* which was published in 1886. The collected testimonials of SPR necessitat-

ed to upgrade the idea of fictional ghosts to “psychical ghosts” (Delgado, 2017). *Phantasms of The Living* determined a term called “telepathy” which consists of an agent (affectioner) and a percipient (affected). SPR has collected most of their data from telepathic forms and documented their organisms. The collections of data systematized the psychical researches.

A French physiologist named Charles Richet contributed the term “ectoplasm” to the field of psychical research as an effusion and sarcodic extensions coming from the human body of mediums (Alvarado, 2015). Richet whose name was regarded by SPR agglomerated scientific research with the spiritual field. Even though he was disappointed from some of the seances, he still managed to ascertain the significant faculties of the mediums who leastwise impressed him. The new scientific approaches have consisted of scholars, scientists and literary figures so that the scientific approach could not be detached from assimilation into society and attributed to spiritualists as a limited function.

1. Assimilation of Spiritualism into Society

The ensuring of wealth and happiness by the political power determines the position of spiritualism and spiritualists within society. Only an accomplished society engenders (more of) a secret society and positions it as an anti-thesis of a larger society which functions within wide relationships (Simmel, 2016: 44). There is a distinction between the modern society and primitive society. Georg Simmel explains this distinction as: “Primitive man, living in communities of restricted extent, providing for his needs by his own production or by direct co-operation, limiting his spiritual interests to personal experience or to simple tradition, surveys and controls the material of his existence more easily and completely than the man of higher culture” (Simmel, 2002: 444). In addition to his explanation Simmel also states that:

In a much wider degree than people are accustomed to realize, modern civilized life—from the economic system which is constantly becoming more and more a credit-economy, to the pursuit of science, in which the majority of investigators must use countless results obtained by others, and not directly subject to verification depends upon faith in the honor of others (Simmel, 2002: 445).

The rapid change in culture creates difficulties for assimilations to them, so that a fragmentation has been created in which the religion or

faith has a collective scope to be securely gathered under pluralism. Simmel differentiates the old rural life from metropolis in terms of an outwards opening. While the rural peoples' relations with the outside world were limited, the position of a self in a group intercepted to gain a progression of a specific individual in the community. Hence, the 18th century asked for a disengagement from the restrictiveness of communities in order to attribute an authenticity to an individual. The first struggle of an individual has been against the nature. The modernization process in the 19th century was based on another struggle which has become the functional specialization to support the freedom and appreciate the authenticity of the self. Simmel states that the general principles of communities or societies were based on the progression of each individual who functions in a community. Simmel states that:

The development of modern culture is characterized by the predominance of what one can call the objective spirit over the subjective; that is, in language as well as in law, in the technique of production as well as in art, in science as well as in the objects of domestic environment, there is embodied a sort of spirit (Geist), the daily growth of which is followed only imperfectly and with an even greater lag by the intellectual development of the individual (Simmel, 2002: 18).

Simmel's statement means that the mastering of the subjectivity has bounds with interrelations with the others (Strhan, 2013: 135). Furthermore, there has been a subjective division in faith as Anna Strhan demonstrates with Christianity as the reading of Bible unearths the Earthly passions of the subjects (Strhan, 2013: 140). The fragmentation has a significance which could be associated with spiritualism as a discovery of potentials such as the sensitivity while the specific field has been studied. On the other hand, pluralism creates a marketplace which augments new forms of faith that suit an individual. The accommodation leaves the hierarchy and dependency and implements a democracy (Strhan, 2013: 129). Spiritualism used this opportunity of fragmentation and democracy as mediation between the determinist science which refused any of the psychic phenomena and superstition. Therefore, the spiritualists have been assimilated to changes while remaining loyal to their specific field. Their mediatory position resides in assumptions which were adopted by both scientific and literary figures who did not manage to confirm them, but who had to accept them by adopting the faith. For instance, apart from the spiritual symbolisms of Wil-

liam Blake, Lord Byron, Mary/Percy Shelley and John William Polidori, the literary productions of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle brought out to be in touch with the ghostly encounters. An official founding called “The Ghost Club” has been established in 1862 which has not been only attracted by celebrities but also by the politicians, scholars and scientists. Women were submitted as members too latterly. Whether some of them turned out to be sceptics about the club’s agenda such as Charles Dickens, the subject which the club was interested in has become significant in their accommodations with society. While spiritualism did not have a specific doctrine, the spiritualists did not exclude themselves as a secret society but as a faith which could be easily adopted to the ongoing progressions. It was not a coincidence that the spiritualists have adopted science to prove the factuality of spirits. Doyle’s position in literature and spiritualism briefly demonstrates the accommodation. The year 1881 was substantial in Doyle’s life as his notable protagonist Sherlock Holmes was created, he was affiliated with SPR and he attended his first seance. The year 1898 was his initiation to The Hermetic Order of The Golden Dawn. Aleister Crowley’s protagonist Simon Iff who has been created in 1916 had some similarities as much as some major distinctions from Holmes. Crowley despises the protagonist Holmes since Crowley thinks that the rationalist approach of Holmes’ methods are the results of Doyle’s complexness of his affiliation with spiritualism. Crowley also accuses Holmes for being ignorant (Saridoğan, 2018: 31). The observation methods of Holmes have equivalences in Doyle’s spiritual seeking. While Holmes has sought evidence by his logic and deep attention, Doyle has sought the factuality of an afterlife by his logic and attention (Cadwallader, 2008: 23). Doyle’s late-works in the first quarter of the 20th century have been mostly focused on spiritualism. He wrote two books in regard of photography as much as spiritualism. *The Case for Spirit Photography* defended the notable spirit photographer of the first-half of the 20th century named as William Hope and the other defended the factuality of the Cotttingley photographs (fairy photographs) which were developed by two cousins Elsie Wright and Frances Griffiths. Doyle has also been a sitter for various photographic seances. Even though the photographing methods of the each photographer have shown varieties, Doyle was impressed and excited. Jen Cadwallader paraphrases from Doyle in regard of his excitement in spirit photography as: “Whatever the eventual explanation, the only hypothesis which at present covers the facts is that of a wise invisible Intelligence, presiding over the operation and working in his own fashion,

which shows different results with different circles” (Cadwallader, 2008: 24). The first factor in the accommodation of spiritualism with society is the adoption of science which corresponds with the conditions that surround its object by referring to the incorporation of death. Leslie-Smith mentions this fragmentation and the role of science in the assimilation of spiritualism within society as:

In spite of the pleas of a few Enlightened scientists, science in general refused to make slightest attempt to investigate the claims of Spiritualism, but merely rejected them without any hearing, as is always the way of an established order that finds itself threatened. It was unfortunately strengthened in this attitude by the fraudulent practices of some mediums. Theology naturally attributed any supersensory powers to possession by devils (Leslie-Smith, 1987: 1-2).

Helena Petrovna Blavatsky challenges one of the foremost debunkers such as the conjuror Jean-Eugène Robert-Houdin whose name has been taken by Harry Houdini (the most notable illusionist of the 20th century) and other sceptics to reproduce the most common tricks which an Indian juggler could instantly perform such as turning a rupee into a live cobra, setting a seed to grow and plant less than a quarter hour, floating in the air when the juggler has been stretched and removed from three upward swords under unprepared, undressed and spontaneous conditions (Blavatsky, 2013: 79-80). The attackers against spiritualism gained such reputation by simplifying the spiritual phenomena as forms of juggling tricks. Positivism is the primary source of rejecting any spiritual ideas. The attack of positivism dates back to Michael Faraday and David Brewster who were both physicists and who did remarkable studies in optics (Blavatsky, 2013: 81). Faraday’s optic isolation has significance in the subjectivity of sight and observation while Brewster is the inventor of kaleidoscope. Positivism emerged in France by the scientist Auguste Comte and has been spread through Germany, Great Britain and America. Blavatsky associates Comte with prophecy and positivism with religion in which both have many disciples having a blind confidence in it (Blavatsky, 2013: 82). Also, Blavatsky thinks that positivism is clearly nihilism and ignorance because she confutes the thesis of positivism from the anti-thesis which Comte too admits that he has known very little about the laws of nature and the reasons behind them. Comte’s confession of limited knowledge about the laws of nature has been associated with rejection. Psychology which examines metaphysicians is also

incapable of refuting the spiritual phenomena. Blavatsky's *The Secret Doctrine* was meant to agglomerate spiritualism with science and theology. The sources of positivism, nihilism and modern sciences have been already constituted by borrowing the scope of the Eastern civilizations (Blavatsky, 2013: 106-107). For instance, a cosmological theorist named as Giordano Bruno was accused of heresy because of rejecting the Catholic doctrines. Bruno was attested by I. Alvise Mocenigo for the following statements:

There is no distinction of persons in God, and that it would be imperfection in God; that the world is eternal, and that there are infinite worlds, and that God makes them continually, because, he says, He desires all He can; that Christ did apparent miracles and was a magician, and so were the apostles, and that he had a mind to do as much and more than they did; that Christ showed an unwillingness to die, and shunned death all He could; that there is no punishment of sin, and that souls created by the operation of nature pass from one animal to another, and that as the brute animals are born of corruption, so also are men when after dissolution they come to be born again (Blavatsky, 2013: 103).

On the contrary, Blavatsky defends that Bruno was neither an atheist nor materialist but only an adherent of Phytagoras fundamentally who thought the philosophies of upper Asia (Blavatsky, 2013: 101). The sophisticated debate between science, theology and spiritualism necessitated investigations and objectionable investigations which caused such recriminations of science against both spiritualism and theology. There are two significant names that connect the rise of spiritualism in Europe with Satanism apart from the rational explanations. The first name is Jules Eudes Mirville, a French Marquis who wrote *Pneumatologie* in 1856 and the second name is Gougenot des Mousseaux who was the follower of Mirville. Mirville decomposed the French spiritists (The French preferred to call themselves as "spiritists") from the British and American, and associated the French evaluation of spiritualism with the Devil since the French spiritists were rather anticlerical and Anti-Christian. Mirville substantiated electricity and natural causes with the spiritual phenomena; nevertheless they were all the works of the Devil (Introvigne, 2016: 92). On the other hand, Gougenot's association of spiritualism with his anti-Semitic views relies on his classification of two types of Kaballah which are "sincerely Christian" and "false and full of superstition". The latter is ascribed to "demonology" and contacts with demons. The rejection of the "superstitious" Kaballah results

with atheism and positivism in the age of rationalism (Introvigne, 2016: 93). While Mirville substantiated electricity and natural causes for the spiritual phenomena, Gougenot went further, denied them all and simply substantiated the actions of The Devil (Introvigne, 2016: 94). On the other hand, Agénor de Gasparin who wrote *Science vs. Modern Spiritualism* in 1857 designed the early attempts of psychical researches by owning the values of the Protestant Church. Blavatsky paraphrases from Gasparin as:

Protestantism is naturally less rich in miracles than other faiths, because it lives in presence of the Scriptures, and rejects tradition. Yet, it has not always been so faithful to its principles, as not sometimes to participate, on this point as on others, in the opinions by which it is surrounded, and we therefore see that Protestantism lays claim to a certain number of miracles, perfectly proved, as a matter of course; there is no lack of testimony in their support” (Blavatsky, 1893: 11).

Gasparin’s researches confute Mirville and Gougenot who substantiated the Devil. Gasparin experimented the table rappings which were the prevailing spiritual events along with Professor Marc Thury of The Academy of Geneva. They both substantiated physical and natural causes for the phenomena in which Gasparin has not dissociated the phenomena produced by the will from the ones produced spiritually. But, there is an absence in his dissociation which has been the role of a medium. Apart from the mesmerizers, a medium necessitates being passive (Blavatsky, 2013: 120). Thury thinks that the spiritual phenomena were conducted by nonhuman force, substance or agent called as “psychode” which has been an organic and inorganic aetheric matter and which merges into the “ectenic” force. Ectenic force is the same force which notable physicist, chemist and psychical researcher Crookes called as the “psychic force” (Blavatsky, 2013: 123-124). Ectenic force is termed as “(...) the power exerted when the mind acts at a distance through the influence of the psychode” (Crookes, 1874: 26-27). Thury does not substantiates the dead for these apparitions but the psychode as an ectenic force. Nevertheless, Thury does not agree with Gasparin who has claimed to know everything by being true to science. Gasparin as a Protestant has taken a stand against the two Roman Catholics, Mirville and Guegnot by adopting the science for the explanation of the spiritual phenomena. His rebellion was against the superstitious Catholic tradition. The substantiations of Gasparin and Thury had no significances in death that satisfied the exigency of a scientific research in spiritual phe-

nomena. The prevailing spiritual seances agglomerated the distinction of an inadequate Christian confirmation with the possibility of a communion with the deceased. Frank Podmore designates the volition of spiritualism as:

The one positive tenet common to all Spiritualists was the possibility of communion with the spirits of deceased men and women. But associated with this belief almost universally was the conception of the other life as one of limitations and conditions not unlike the present; a world of orderly and continuous progression. This conception implicitly carried with it the negation of the distinctive Christian doctrines, as commonly understood—the scheme of redemption, of heaven and hell, and of a last judgment (Podmore, 2010: 301).

The fashions of the popular spiritual seances were table gatherings to communicate with the deceased. The medium has fallen into trance and summoned the deceased who would answer neither any specific questions of an attendee which could not be possibly known by the medium nor any other attendees. The answers were provided by rappings in terms of affirmation and negation. The rapidity of rappings has stand for indicating the age, time or year. There has not been a respond when the wrong answer has been pronounced until the deceased knocks and confirms the correct one. Furthermore, the deceased has affirmed his/her affinity to an attendee; the years passed since his/her death and the specific cause of his/her death which sounded assertive to a single attendee. The same attendee has claimed to be the close relative who has confirmed any affirmation provided through rappings. Hayden, who was the wife of a former editor of a Boston journal called *The Star-Spangled Banner* and who came to England from America in 1852 to start the rapping phenomena had been welcomed like a celebrity. Catherine Crowe who wrote *The Night-Side of Nature or Ghosts and Ghost-Seers* was one of the many who attended her table seances. Hayden drew attention of both spiritualist and the scientific field. It was the moment when spiritualism began to form a crisis of conflictions and conversions. George Henry Lewes who was a philosopher and a literary critic attended Hayden's seances and discovered that her spiritual power was fake and trickery (Lamont, 2004: 901). Hayden's rapping seances consisted of an alphabet and the sitter marked the letters. The letters were not valid unless they have been indicated by the rappings of the spirit. According to Lewes, he has communicated with a "fictious" spirit spelled as "Nelly Sorel" as his so-called relative even though he did not have any intention to

mark some of the letters which “Nelly Sorel” was spelled. Sorel claimed that she died at 1855 and had six remaining children which were negated by Lewes’ himself. The devastating moment for Lewes in Hayden’s seance was the tapping indication when Hayden has been asked a written and unspoken question and the reply was “Y-E-S”. Therefore, Lewes was quite convinced that the answers were supplied by Hayden as forms of diversion and Lewes pretended to be fascinated because he found out that the answers which Hayden supplied were his false indications (Britten, 1884: 132). Nevertheless, this debunking article of Lewes which was published in *The Leader* did not revoke the admirers easily. The clergyman, Rev. A. W. Hobson insisted that the men of religion should give a thought on spiritualism since he was deeply impressed by Hayden’s seances. Hobson was sure about the facticity of the phenomena (Doyle, 1926: 163). Dr. John Elliotson who was the president of the Secular Society tagged phrenologist Dr. John Ashburner after him to convert into spiritualism (Doyle, 1926: 154). Ashburner’s firm 1853 letter to the editor of *The Leader* features these statements:

I declare to you that Mrs. Hayden is no impostor, and he who has the daring to come to an opposite conclusion must do so at the peril of his character for truth. I defy Mr. Lewes or anyone else to prove the acts of imposition or fraud in the phenomena that require the presence of such a medium as Mrs. Hayden for their development. I have calmly, deliberately, and very cautiously studied this subject (Britten, 1884: 133).

The same letter also declares that:

I have no hesitation in saying that, much as I have seen of Mesmerism and of clairvoyance –grand as were my anticipations of the vast amount of good to accrue to the human race, in medical and physical improvement, from the explanation given to them by the cultivation of their extensive relations- all sink into shade and comparative insignificance, in the contemplation of those consequences which must result from the spirit manifestations (Britten, 1884: 133).

Peter Lamont terms these confusions as the “crisis of evidence”. Daniel Dunglas Home who was one of the most debated mediums of the 19th century gained a popularity among aristocrats and statesmen such as Napoleon III., Queen Sophie of Holland and Tsar Alexander II.. Home was capable of levitating before the attendees, elongating his body, moving objects,

manifesting the spirits and visualizing “spirit hands” to make the attendees feel their touch. Home also gained the attention of a medical specialist named as Dr. Charles Lockhart Robertson and the optic expert Brewster (Lamont, 2004: 901). Both scientists were demanding to debunk the trickery of Home by referring to the terms of their provinces: Robertson claimed that Home’s phenomena were simply “imaginings” which were the mixture of hallucinations with optic illusions and they were related to a mental disease. Even though Brewster tried the best of his province to confute Home’s phenomena, both he and Robertson failed to prove such a trickery. There had been conflictions between two societies; The Royal Society and The London Dialectical Society who accepted that there had been an irrefutable phenomena which uplifted to focus on spiritualism scientifically (Lamont, 2004: 902-911).

2. Psychic Force and the Scientification of Spiritualism

Crookes coined the above said term “psychic force” after his experiments with Home. Home was put to test with substantial apparatuses such as an accordion, cage, wire and mahogany board to solve the two mysteries which were (i) the playing of a musical instrument without any direct human intervention, and (ii) alterations in body weight (Crookes, 1874: 10). Crookes set the accordion which was surrounded by a cage under a table where one of Home’s hands remained on the table while the thumb and middle finger of the other only touched the head of the accordion. While his feet were kept a close watch, the accordion played just a few notes, and then it played a melody and began to float inside the cage without any human agency. Home put his free hand on the hand of the experimenters so that his both hands were visible to them. Crookes also touched and examined Home’s arms in search of trickery and noticed that none of Home’s muscles were moving (Crookes, 1874: 14). The experiments in the alteration of weight also consisted of a mahogany board which was placed at the dead-end of a table and was held by a spring balance hanging from a tripod stand (Crookes, 1874: 11). The fluctuation of the board and the discerning of the balance were apparent while there had been an alteration in Home’s weight which was repeated several times. Crookes stood up on the table to avoid Homes from exerting pressure on the board but the results remained the same (Crookes, 1874: 15). All the arrangements of the apparatuses convinced Crookes that there had been an “unexplained” and “unexplored” force to be studied (Crookes, 1874: 17). Crookes’ experiments were recognized by two important men of science and letters: The astron-

omer William Huggins who would serve as the president of The Royal Society between 1900-1905 and Edward William Cox who was a publisher and a member of The London Dialectical Society. Huggins who was convinced of Crookes' experiments did not coin a specific term but Cox correlated the "psychic force" of Crookes with nerve-system, physiology and psychology. He approved the term "psychic force" and he additionally defined it as "the persons in whom it is manifested in extraordinary power" (Crookes, 1874: 19). Nevertheless, the current confliction on the "crisis of evidence" was still inadequate to focus on spiritualism under the dominion of science unless the precipitating motivation for spiritualism has been recognized as death and the focus point of science to search the phenomena has intersected with death. Crookes mentions the confliction between science and spiritualism as the confirmation of a force which was termed whether as "psychic" or "ectenic". The usage of these nomenclatures of physics, physiology, chemistry and psychology did not substantiate the dead who remained stable after death. For instance, Crookes compared such intelligences similar to Hayden's and Home's with scientific nomenclatures as:

The spiritualist tells of tapping sounds which are produced in different parts of a room when two or more persons sit quietly round a table. The scientific experimenter is entitled to ask that these taps shall be produced on the stretched membrane of his phonograph (Crookes, 1874: 6).

3. Agglomeration of the Defender and the Debunker

The psychical researches have intensified to throw both the sceptic and the spiritualist together. Physiologist Lewes who indented to debunk Hayden worked on the connection of philosophical and physiological aspects of mind and body. He also contributed to the amending positivism of Comte (Rilett, 2016: 4-21). On the contrary, there was Wallace who was the author of *Man's Place in The Universe*, *The Malay Archipelago*, *Darwinism*, *Geographical Distribution of Animals*, *Natural Selection and Tropical Nature* and one of the foremost scientists in the natural selection alongside with Charles Darwin. His first acquaintances with spiritualism started in 1865 and he gradually converted himself into a spiritualist. Even though his first seances did not consist of a medium, the levitations of tables impressed him and he expanded his researches with mediums like Mrs. Marshall, Home and Agnes Guppy. Wallace's studies on the natural selection had focused on the origin of man along with Darwin while Wallace's further disengagement from the field substantiated the soul. Jay Kottler mentions that the scien-

tific research and spiritualism had agglomerated themselves together as “the essence of man was his spirit: “if you leave out the spiritual nature of man you are not studying man at all” (Kottler, 1974: 163). Wallace tried to convince sceptics such as Thomas Henry Huxley, William Benjamin Carpenter, Darwin, and John D. Tyndall to attend these seances to make them confirm the reality of the phenomena. He also managed to convince Darwin to attend a 1874 seance with medium Williams in which Darwin had been puzzled by the floating materials across the parlor. Another seance of Williams which Darwin attended along with Huxley relieved Darwin because Huxley was totally convinced of an imposture which Darwin agreed with him (Kottler, 1974: 170-174). But Wallace became a devoted spiritualist in the same year. As Kottler paraphrases from Wallace’s 1874 Fortnightly Review article: “My position, therefore, is that the phenomena of Spiritualism in their entirety do not require further confirmation. They are proved, quite as well as any facts are proved in other sciences; and it is not denial or quibbling that can disprove any of them, but only fresh facts and accurate deductions from those facts.” (Kottler, 1974: 177).

Wallace also responded to Lewes in regard of Hayden twenty-three years after Lewes debunked Hayden and wrote an article in *The Leader*. An article in *Spiritualism Link* paraphrases the statement of Wallace which appeared in the 23 December 1876, *Spectator* and depicts how scientific exposure could also be deceptive. His response includes the following statement:

The one experiment was purely negative and inconclusive, the other positive; and I cannot understand how so logical a mind as that of Mr. G. H. Lewes can put the two results even in the same category, much less allow the negative evidence to prevail (URL-1; Wallace, 1876: 1608).

The spiritualist discourse defended that such condemnations as Lewes did were not accurate expressions to convey a message of fraudulence since a socialist figure as Robert Owen and a scientific figure as Robert Chambers declared their embracing of spiritualism when they witnessed a seance (Carmack, 2020: 161). The embracing of spiritualism points how the self and collective experiences of seances affected the sitters and researchers. Therefore, a strict declaration of fraudulence did not emphasize the defender and legitimate the sceptic.

4. The Society for Psychical Research, Telepathy and It's Sub-terms in Scientific Approaches to Spiritualism

The spiritual and scientific intensifications have been fairly clarified by The Society for Psychical Research (SPR) by taking the human psyche into the main consideration. SPR's Constitution was:

To prevent misconception, it is here expressly stated that Membership of this Society does not imply the acceptance of any particular explanation of the phenomena investigated, nor any belief as to the operation in the physical world, of forces other than those recognized by physical science (Gurney and others, 1886: 10).

SPR was previously the Psychological Society of Great Britain which was under the presidency of Edward Cox in 1875 and dissolved in 1879 after Cox's death. SPR was one of the societies among Central Association of Spiritualists and London Spiritualist Alliance to focus on the prevalent phenomena specifically. What differentiate SPR from the other societies is the seeking evidences for the existence of spirits. The society's presidents were notable physicists, chemists, psychologists and philosophers. The presidents until the 20th century were philosopher Henry Sidgwick (between 1882-1884, and his second presidency was between 1888-1892), physicist Balfour Stewart (1885-1887), philosopher Arthur Balfour (in 1893), psychologist and philosopher William James (1894-1895), chemist and physicist William Crookes (1896-1899) and scholar and philosopher Frederick W.H. Myers in 1900. SPR did not fall into error of being affected by the mediums' impacts. Furthermore, the mediums have rather debunked themselves in SPR's exactly prepared seance rooms where the preparations were quite convenient to reveal any kind of trickery. Another discrepancy of SPR was its conceptualization of paranormal activities which shared collective and mutual experiences. The two major concepts which SPR tackled were "telepathy" and "thought transference". These two terms have been coined by Myers. The collective data of SPR on thought transference and telepathy have been published in their journal called *The Proceedings* and an anthology named as *Phantasms of The Living* which did not hesitate to document the oral and verbal sources. There were two ways of telepathy: (i) Ideal (the transition of thought and images of the agent to the percipient) and (ii) Phantasmal. (The agent is no longer the affectioner but the affected such as the appearance of a dying subject.) SPR intended to exclude the fictitious side of spiritualism outside its agenda. The characteristic

of SPR was its withdrawal from the romantic ghost fictions which L. Anne Delgado offered the term “psychical ghost” for a formulation of both spiritual and scientific theory. Furthermore, “psychical ghost” contains the motivations of psychology which justify the approach of SPR to the research of human psyche (Delgado, 2017: 237). The withdrawal from the romantic ghost means a shift which does not concern the poeticalness of a regain with the deceased. The shift concerns under which conditions and time/space the human psyche would create it. Delgado defines the psychical ghost as:

[Psychical ghost] refer to spectral entities as they were defined by the SPR in their attempts to reorient Victorian understandings of the phantasmal. On the one hand, the term captures the antithetical aims of such research: it illustrates the tension between the psychical or natural World and the ghostly or supernatural World that dogged the Society in its attempts to articulate a spectral theory (Delgado, 2017: 237).

The psychical ghost revealed how SPR has taken spiritualism into consideration. SPR ascertained the range of psychic faculties and avoided enunciating or refuting the reality of their inferences. The common narratives of spirits were acknowledged by SPR which correlated how the fictional embracing of ghosts still infused into the “psychical ghost”. SPR did not render a specific epistemology of ghostly entities nor it assested their exact existences. SPR’s innocuous and neutral sightings of ghosts prejudiced to indicate that the spirits could still interact with the living as facultative entities. Therefore, this laminated research field also consisted of examining renowned mediums under great surveillance which would easily debunk any trickery. Even though their procedure seemed materialistic, the society’s disclosure was that if such a proof for the survival of death existed, this substantiation would be apparent unless psychological, physiological and psychical aspects would not be experimentalized. The society was not despondent but rather effusive in the earlier stages. Nevertheless, the decomposition from fiction was not a strict attitude. It was to scientificate what has not been specifically identified but fantasized by proposing such humanitarian desires as survival of death and communicating with spirits. SPR’s explication relies on identificating the fantasies of the human agenda which the same society firmly declares that some phenomena could not be scientifically stated. Therefore, the unspecified and fantasized have been conceptualised under two main concepts “telepathy” and “thought trans-

ference” which remunerated an ability on some sensitive people. SPR’s specification of telepathy is:

Telepathy, or the ability of one mind to impress or to the impressed by another mind otherwise than through the recognised channels of sense. (Of the two persons concerned, the one whose mind impresses the other will be called the agent, and the one whose mind is impressed the percipient) (Gurney and others, 1886: 13).

SPR derived many sub-concepts from the collective experiments such as thought transference, experimental and spontaneous telepathy, mental pictures, emotional and motor affects of telepathy, borderland and hallucinations as transient or telepathic. These concepts require to be defined: (i) Thought-transference is the reading of the thoughts of another person (percipient) by an agent against the percipient’s will. It has been associated with conscious collusion or unconscious. Its conclusivity relies on the experiments on “writing” the thought of the percipient when it is intended to be seceded from clarifying this particular field with unconscious. (ii) Experimental telepathy is the agent’s concentration on the percipient’s mind without his notification even he was distant from the agent. (iii) Spontaneous telepathy is associated with superstitious beliefs of magic such as sighting the death of a person by the percipient, sometimes in the agent’s form. A traditional poem features these verses:

This maid had nearly reached her home
When she was startled by a cry
And she turned to look around her
And her love was standing by
His hand was pointing to the stars
And his eyes gazed at the light
And with a smiling countenance
He vanished from her sight” (Traditional)

These verses do not only characterize the essentials of spontaneous telepathy but contents of telepathy which also fall under hallucinations. The same poem also features these lines:

She quickly turned and home she ran
Not a word of this was said
For well she knew at seeing his form
That her faithful love was dead (1886: 13).

(iv) Mental pictures are the strong affectionings of the percipient from the thought of an exact figure by the agent. (v) Emotional effects occur in close people such as twins. (vi) Motor effects disclose an intended thought which has been responded by the other. (vii) Borderland remarks another colloquial language of being affected by a sight when the percipient was neither asleep nor fully awake.

5. Hallucinations

Hallucinations occur in two categories: (i) Telepathic, (ii) Transient. Telepathic hallucinations are cogitated as a distinction from the “agent-to-percipient” principle. They were tackled as a contribution to the “sight” by the percipient’s himself. SPR also listed dreams which could be regarded as telepathic. A November 1883 narrative of K. Gibson exposes her dream of an ill-faced young man who was coughing and seemed to be dead soon. Gibson recognized the young man as a friend of her brother. The young man told her that he had caught a cold a month ago and he had neglected it and supposed to be dead soon from a rapid consumption. Even though Gibson did not reveal her dream to anybody, she heard the news of the death of the same person in a Sunday breakfast with the exact time and diagnose of the deceased (a month ago) and also with the exact cause of death. Her brother also exposed that his friend has neglected the disease and it had settled on his chest. Gibson’s sister also confirms their experience as they were informed and impressed by the death. Even though Sidgwick who interviewed Gibson found this experiment less detailed, he supposed that this dream could be originated telepathically (Gurney and others, 1886: 35, 352). Another demonstration of a telepathic hallucination is also apparent in a 1884 narrative of R. Gibson who clarified his late grandfather in detail when he was walking home. SPR formulates these recognitions of phantasms as (1) a recognition after the incident, (2) a recognition in graduality and (3) in distinct stages. SPR states that the gradual appearing of a phantasm was a rare phenomenon such as the experience of Gibson. Gibson describes his experience as:

As well as I can remember, it was in the year 1862. I know it was in the early part of my courting days, so that it must have been 1862 or 1863. I was walking home one night about 10 p.m. -the night was not dark, I could see clearly for many yards ahead- when I met face to face a man in the bye-road which leads from the high road to my father’s house. I felt that sort of start one does when you feel you are coming against something in the dark, without

actually striking against it. Then the thought came, confound his impudence, why does he not move out of my way and I stepped straight forward, intending to walk bang into him, but as I stepped right up to him, with my chest up to him, he was gone, and the instant as he vanished I thought, “Oh, Lord, that is my grandfather Gibson (Gurney and others, 1886: 520).

The relation of the human mind with diseases and excitement has an adjunctive condition. Subjective motivations adjust with excitement and expectancy. A July 1882 narrative by Fox Powys fits the matter of transient hallucination: While she was waiting for her husband to come home, she heard the arrival of him with a cab, speaking with the driver and ringing the bell. She went to her drawing-room and she heard his footsteps climbing the stairs but there were no signs of her husband’s arrival. She also states that there was not a sign of the cab since the street remained quiet. When her husband arrived lately, she was informed that he has missed the train and was afraid to worry her for being late (Gurney and others, 1886: 515). SPR combined the hallucinogenic sounds with the exaggeration of expectancy which these kinds of familiar sounds could be seen commonly. On the other hand, SPR was sure that this recognition of a husband’s exact voice was a direction from the husband’s thoughts to the percipient which were full of panic of frightening her wife who was expecting her husband soon.

SPR states that “the scientist is in danger of forgetting the unstable and unmechanical nature of the material, and of closing the door too dogmatically on phenomena” (Gurney and others, 1886: 13). This statement leads to an interpretation of SPR throughout its historical context and it enters the unconscious of the society. The unconscious drew a line between the material, historical and ideological surroundings of the society to reduce a common statement like “all mediums are impostors”. SPR reduced to be affected by sentimentality to anticipate a communication with the deceased. Therefore, a sentimental affect on the facts did not justify the desire to consult psychical forces. This texture created a contentious disappointment for many members of the society because of the assumption of a stray from the general principles of SPR. The above-mentioned narrative of R. Gibson’s follows these lines which justify why the sentimentality of acquaintances with the dead should not be avoided even though a scientific research intends to withdraw from over emotionality:

I had never been much with him and at the time I was thinking only of the events of the evening, as I suppose most young men madly

in love, as I was, would have been. I was about as happy and as full of health and life as I suppose any fellow could possibly be. It was quite a puzzle to me for many years what it could have been for; but I think I know now (Gurney and others, 1886: 520).

Doyle reminds Sidgwick's 1882 statement which attributed the denial of the phenomena as a scandal despite their age was enlightened in terms of spiritual evidences (Doyle, 1926: 57). His recall of Sidgwick's statement was to address a fluctuation on how society has forgotten the main doctrine of what was once assertively professed. The declination especially arose within fifteen years of experiments on Leonora Piper whose mediumistic faculty had a change of heart in the well acceptations of the society. The long acting investigators of Piper featured James, Richard Hodgson, James Hyslop and Myers. These experiments started with James in 1885. Piper's skills in the seances were led by her control spirit named as Dr. Phinuit who was primarily a French doctor but his identity could not be exactly discovered. Phinuit was furtherly replaced by George Pelham who was claimed to be a literary man and died of falling from a horse (Doyle, 1926: 71). A control spirit is defined as:

Controls have distinct personalities. Generally, they are childlike; some are mischievous and have a sense of humor. They may offer a great deal of information about themselves and their past and who they were in life, or they may say very little about themselves. In some cases they say they are ancestors of the medium. Their speech may be very fluid with the appropriate accents and intonations. Some, however, sound stilted and stylized, so that their personalities seem to be obviously fictitious (Guiley, 2007: 100).

In contact with these control spirits, Piper had the ability to answer many questions asked and possibly not known by the experimenter nor any other attendees. Her answers proved to be correct. For instance, James received an answer for where the lost bank-book of his mother-in-law was and Piper's answer pinpointed the exact place of the lost object (Doyle, 1926: 67). Piper's control spirits also comforted the sitters by assuring their wealth in the afterlife and allowed to communicate the living with their deceaseds. Another remarkable incident was the death of Hodgson in 1905 who soon claimed to contact with Piper in great details both explaining himself and his companions (Doyle, 1926: 68). Hodgson's conclusion on Piper was that the spiritualistic hypothesis was the exact hypothesis for the explanation of what he has witnessed but further criticisms defended that

the “cross correspondences” of Piper proved none of her psychic power but rather her ability to obtain information (Doyle, 1926: 81). SPR’s innocuous and neutral sightings of ghosts prejudiced their readers to indicate that the spirits could still interact with the living as facultative entities. The spirits remained as who they were and still had the faculty of caring the living. Even though the readers of *Phantasms of The Living* managed to infer how “psychical ghosts” sparked off a spiritual inspiration, Sidgwick, Edmund Gurney and Myers have become destitute for their declaration of failure to prove the life after death. Myers woefully stated that: “My own career has been a long struggle to seize and hold the actual truth amid illusion and fraud. I have been mocked with many a mirage, caught in many a Sargasso Sea” and Sidgwick’s testimony was as assertive as: “I have been facing the fact that I am drifting steadily to the conclusion ... that we have not, and are never likely to have, empirical evidence of the existence of the individual after death” (Delgado, 2017: 247).

6. Ectoplasm and Its Functions in Seances

These destitutions of Sidgwick, Gurney and Myers were rather unfair to the scientific researches which tried their best to obtain substantial results to prove the existences of spirits. For instance, a French physiologist named Richet contributed the term “ectoplasm” to the field of psychical research as an effusion and sarcodic extensions coming from the human bodies of mediums (Alvarado, 2015). Ectoplasm has already been eagerly investigated long before SPR was formed, and these names featured Wallace along with Crookes who has seen the visible hands in Home’s seances. Furthermore, the most encouraging researches had also been done after Gurney’s suspicious death in 1888, Sidgwick’s death in 1900 and Myers’ death in 1901. The definition of the ectoplasm is: It is a visible and -sometimes- touchable liquid and fluid substance which diffused from the medium’s body, especially from the mouth, nose, ears and genitals while in trance. It is a free-formed and shapeless substance at first sight but slowly takes the shape of a human body or the spirit of a dead. These materializations could walk, speak and react in some occasions such as the materialization of an entity named “Bien Boa” in Eva Carrière’s seances who was the most notable materialization medium of the early 20th century. The bodily condition of a medium and the aetheric conditions of the space where the seance took place led to expound the essence of the ectoplasm as it restrained the medium and got into an apparent shape in parallel with the medium’s force. The remarkable aspect of the ectoplasm was its photographable

visibility. Albert von Schrenck-Notzing who did photographic experiments on the ectoplasm managed to capture this substance explicitly in Carri re’s seances. Schrenck-Notzing mentions the role of science in clarification of the spiritual phenomena as:

Our investigation of nature is subject to change. We have no justification for condemning a priori, though a healthy scepticism can only contribute to the furtherance of truth. A recollection of the revolutionary results of investigation obtained in the last few decades may, however, have cleared the judgement of the present world of science. Thus our present time appears to be better disposed towards the reception and sober examination of new facts, however strange and absurd they may appear to be (Schrenck-Notzing, 1923: 2).

The photographic visibility of the ectoplasm has been scientifically approved by researchers in the 20th century such as Guy Lyon Playfair, Hernani Guimar es Andrade and Andrija Puharich through the field of the bionics. Andrade would coin the term “Psi matter” which suggested that the negatively charged ectoplasm would dissolve biconically from the body of the medium, then the ectoplasm would move through the spiritual being which wanted to be materialized. When the ectoplasm connected with the psi matter, the force on the ectoplasm would be neutralized to adapt itself into the biomagnetic parts of the spiritual being. Puharich characterizes the ectoplasm as Aura or OD which has a gaseous visibility, different color and scent. Playfair extends that the materialization could easily be demonstrated with a simple experiment with a battery and plate: The condition of the medium would be corresponded with a plate with positive electrode while the materialization would correspond with the other (URL-2). Gustav Geley who was a notable researcher in ectoplasm also attended seances with Carri re and his statement featured the possibility of an imprecision while Carri re’s fraudulence was infeasible. The bionical hypothesizes of the mentioned physicians had one point in common which did not externalize the physical state of the medium. Hereafter the spiritual talent of the medium had been evaluated according to the substantial condition of the body rather than the medium’s religious knowledge or spiritual experiences. Doyle criticizes that the mediums should be surrounded by love and care rather than a sceptic gaze against them since the obtained results under these gazes would be pale and weak. If the proper conditions were prepared, the ectoplasm which was diffused from the body of the medium

would take the shape of a detailed person. Schrenck-Notzing mentioned that what made her seances so absorbing was not only the desire of attendees who wanted to witness the visualization of spirits but also the emancipatory sexual intercourses occurred in these seances (Schrenck-Notzing, 1923: 84). Her seances were consisted of spiritual demonstrations and corroboration of science as much as they were consisted of such exhibitionism which unearthed the dominancy of women and an admissible place for sexual fantasies. Carrière alleged her nudity to prove that no tricks have been prepared and no materials have been inserted to her body before the seances. She also permitted her assistance to finger her genital since that specific part of the body was one of the major points where the ectoplasm would diffuse (Schrenck-Notzing, 1923: 86).

Conclusion

In conclusion, the role of science in spiritualism has been discussed in order to consider that science has not only been a supporting claim but a process of assimilation into the society. Spiritualists have mentioned the importance of consulting science, and then conceptualized the assessments of spiritualism which were the possible communications or visionings of spirits. The primary term to describe the spiritualist phenomena has been the “psychic force” which was coined by Crookes. SPR widened the psychic force with another term coined as “telepathy” and investigated the psychic experiences and documented them with their explanations. Richet’s term “ectoplasm” has been another major term. Science has been eagerly adapted to spiritualism in order to stray away from a superstitious understanding. The adaptation of science served spiritualism to reconsider its context because the new terminologies also intensified the role of mediums, subjective sensitivity and sexual positions. The science was not only a way to impose the spiritualist statements but to embrace a spiritual and sensual way. All these approaches enabled to assess the existences of spirits and ensure a communication with them. Furthermore, the nomenclatures of spiritual seances would be considered as scientific.

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