

# CONFLICTS BETWEEN SPIRITUALIST, CAPITALIST, AND SCIENTIFIC DISCOURSES IN CATHERINE CROWE'S "THE ITALIAN'S STORY"

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## ABSTRACT

Catherine Crowe's "The Italian's Story" (1859) questions the materialist outlook of the mid-nineteenth century cherished by capitalist and scientific discourses. The story shows that capitalism ignores spiritual reality and encourages the competition for material acquisitiveness. In "The Italian's Story", material indulgence is criticised through an old miser whose sole interest is to increase his fortune. Moreover, "The Italian's Story" demonstrates that experimental science, which investigates the physical realm, is inadequate to explain spiritual and supernatural phenomena, which are investigated by Spiritualism, a nineteenth century religious movement. It exposes the conflict between scientific and spiritualist perspectives through the controversy between 'rational' men, who deny the existence of supernatural beings, and 'irrational' women and villagers, who believe in paranormal powers, whose presence is confirmed by spiritualist discourse. This study claims that "The Italian's Story" argues capitalist and scientific discourses are constrained in that they cannot expound immaterial reality through reason by referring to the Spiritualist movement and Catherine Crowe's *The Night Side of Nature*, or, *Ghosts and Ghost Seers* (1848) and *Spiritualism*, and the *Age We Live in* (1859).

**Keywords:** *Catherine Crowe, "The Italian's Story", Spiritualism, Capitalism, Science.*

## **CATHERINE CROWE’UN “İTALYAN’IN HİKÂYESİ” ADLI ESERİNDE SPİRİTÜALİST, KAPİTALİST VE BİLİMSEL SÖYLEMLER ARASINDAKİ ÇATIŞMALAR**

### **ÖZ**

Catherine Crowe’un “İtalyan’ın Hikâyesi” (1859) adlı eseri, kapitalist ve bilimsel söylemler sayesinde değer bulan on dokuzuncu yüzyılın ortalarına ait materyalist bakış açısını sorgular. Hikâye, kapitalizmin spiritüel gerçekliği görmezden geldiğini ve maddi edinim için rekabeti teşvik ettiğini gösterir. “İtalyan’ın Hikâyesi”nde, tek uğraşı servetini artırmak olan yaşlı ve cimri bir adam aracılığıyla maddiyat düşkünlüğü eleştirilir. Ayrıca “İtalyan’ın Öyküsü,” fiziksel alanı araştıran deneysel bilimin, on dokuzuncu yüzyıl dini hareketi olan Spiritüalizm tarafından araştırılan ruhsal ve doğaüstü olayları açıklamakta yetersiz olduğunu gösterir. Eser, doğaüstü varlıkların varlığını inkâr eden “mantıklı” erkekler ile varlığı spiritüalist söylem tarafından onaylanan paranormal güçlere inanan “mantıksız” kadınlar ve köylüler arasında yaşanan tartışma aracılığıyla bilimsel ve spiritüalist bakış açıları arasındaki çatışmayı sergiler. Bu çalışma, Spiritualist akıma ve Catherine Crowe’un *The Night Side of Nature, or, Ghosts and Ghost Seers* (1848) ve *Spiritualism, and the Age We Live in* (1859) adlı eserlerine atıfta bulunarak “İtalyan’ın Öyküsü”nün, kapitalist ve bilimsel söylemlerin maddi olmayan gerçekliği akıl yoluyla açıklayamadıkları için kısıtlanmış olduklarını ortaya koyduğunu iddia etmektedir.

**Anahtar Sözcükler:** *Catherine Crowe, “İtalyan’ın Hikâyesi,” Spiritüalizm, Kapitalizm, Bilim.*

## INTRODUCTION

Spiritualism, a religious movement, appeared in New York in the 1840s, when the Fox sisters asserted to have contacted the deceased (Stoddard & Stoddard III, 2020: 166). Spiritualists asserted that the body, soul, and spirit are basic elements that constitute human beings and believed that soul is immortal for the spirits of the deceased can be brought back to the material world (Sebastian, 2002: 19). Spiritualist discourse that dwells on the incorporeal and the occult is contrasted with capitalist discourse that has a materialist nature. Valuing corporeal assets and rational enterprises, capitalism is a system based on individual ownership (Dyrness & Kärkkäinen, 2015: 127). When machines started to replace human labour in the 1760s, they became an essential part of capitalist rivalry (McNally, 1988: 14). Marx calls industrial capitalism “the specifically capitalist mode of production” and claims that the Industrial Revolution is an attempt to develop machines to reduce the costs of production (as cited in McNally, 1988: 14). His *Das Kapital* (1867) criticises the capitalist system which manipulates working-class people for the benefit of monied classes (Carter & McRae, 1997: 282). Since the capitalist system favours rivalry and self-benefit, it deteriorates such values as love, peace and morality (Brown, 2012: 35). Hence, capitalists were practical, reasonable, and unsentimental people who considered their own welfare rather than thinking about the problems of the poor (Jensen, 2016).

Denouncing the greed for material, worldly prosperity, Catherine Crowe (1859b), a mid-Victorian spiritualist and writer, criticises mid-Victorian society, where “life has grown into a struggle and a contention for material existence” (131). According to the author, material indulgence is soul-crushing and leads to social disintegration, as well as moral and spiritual corruption (1859b: 131). Although she appreciates people who work hard to earn their livelihood, she condemns those who neglect the sufferings of the poor and maintains that man should be concerned with the wellbeing of others (1859b: 132, 131). Therefore, she attacks self-centred and immoral people who exploit the labour of workers to advance their own material well-being: “Heartbreakers, who live in abundance, and walk abroad with shameless faces, whilst the victims of their wickedness, driven from their home, robbed of their furniture ... seek shelter within the cold bare walls of a garret or a voluntary grave” (1859b: 38-39). Crowe (1848) argues that instead of striving for money and power or being too concerned about the material world, people should cultivate their spiritual nature and think about the afterlife (362).

Spiritualism, which emphasises the presence of “hidden forces” in universe, is also in conflict with science, which is based on provable and quantifiable facts (Armstrong, 2005: 122). The friction between spiritualism and science pertains basically to the difference in their understanding of the world. The motive of scientists is to discover truths that can be verified by scientific experiments and

testimonies (Mahan, 1875: 130). Hence, scientific men do not believe in spiritual and intangible forces and claim that spiritualist phenomena are “the result of imposture, or delusion, or of involuntary muscular action” (Mahan, 1875: 130, 128). For instance, in *Science against Modern Spiritualism* Agénor de Gasparin (1857), a nineteenth-century French researcher, disregards spiritualist practises as “follies” and expresses his disbelief in spiritualism, which studies inexplicable, paranormal figures, like ghosts communicating with living beings through mediums (293). As a spiritualist, Crowe challenges nineteenth-century scientific, materialist discourse that disregards immaterial and supernatural phenomena. She asserts that although materialist scientists renounce the existence of ghosts, whose presence cannot be proven through scientific experiments, there are several people who believe in the possibility of the presence of spiritual beings, like ghosts. Therefore, scientists should not call those who speculate about immaterial reality as illogical or superstitious people without proving the futility of their belief in the spiritual by scientific means (1848: 12). According to the writer, scientists deal with facts and phenomenon that can be explained through reason and material data, therefore, she views science as “an irresponsible power that absolutely rejects all evidence not according with her own views and experience” (1848: 18; 1859b: 107).

Catherine Crowe (1803-1876) juxtaposes spiritualist discourse related to supernatural and incorporeal phenomena with capitalist and scientific discourses, which focus on material, definable, and measurable phenomena, in “The Italian’s Story.” The writer deals with the conflict between spiritualism and capitalism through the story of Jacopo Ferraldi, an old miser. “The Italian’s Story” questions capitalist discourse that disregards immaterial reality through Ferraldi, who represents a capitalist master indulging in material wealth. The story also conveys the opposition between spiritualism and science through the controversy between intellectual, scientific men and uneducated people in the story. It shows that scientific discourse dwells solely on the provable facts, thus, it is unable to explain spiritual phenomena that elude human reason. This study examines the friction between spiritualist, capitalist, and scientific discourses to argue that “The Italian’s Story” claims capitalist and scientific discourses are restricted in that they cannot define immaterial reality through reason, which is held superior to intuition and spiritual experiences.

### **THE CONFLICT BETWEEN SPIRITUALIST AND CAPITALIST DISCOURSES IN “THE ITALIAN’S STORY”**

Crowe’s “The Italian’s Story” criticises capitalist discourse, dealing mainly with Jacopo Ferraldi, an old miser who becomes a murderer due to his obsession with money. In doing so, Crowe shows how people get corrupted by the capitalist

idea that makes people ignore the spiritual and moral values, associated with immateriality, to be solely interested in material entities and their own benefits. Old Ferraldi, who disregards moral and spiritual values, represents a capitalist man that appreciates material wealth as a source of power. Ferraldi's disregard for the immaterial aspect of human beings, and his ambition for material wealth are the driving forces behind his involvement in the capitalist market. He involves in trade to increase his family property, and his obsession with money gets so extreme that he "[grows] to love the money for itself, and not for what it might purchase" (Crowe, 1859a: 175). In this way, money is reduced to a material object having no spiritual or material value for the old man, and it is no longer a means to ensure his survival. His love for money, in turn, makes him a selfish man, who does not consider the wellbeing of other people. Therefore, when he inherits his elder brothers' estates, he prefers to have the whole money for himself instead of helping his relatives or poor, dependent people. As such, the old miser epitomises capitalist ambition, which is attacked by Catherine Crowe as a source of moral decadence. Challenging spiritualist discourse that condemns dwelling too much on material wealth, Ferraldi takes pleasure in indulging in his possessions. Hence, the love for money deteriorates the old man, and he becomes no different than "a watch dog" as he always guards his money (Crowe, 1859a: 175). It is also indicated that this obsession corrupts Ferraldi's soul and deteriorates his mental state. For instance, when the miser loses his two thousand pounds, a small proportion of his possession, he turns into "a madman" and blames an innocent, dying worker for stealing his money (Crowe, 1859a: 176). His soul gets so corrupted that he does not feel any pity for the poor man's death, but he is filled with anger on losing his money: "As ... the man whom he had most reason to suspect was dead, he [the miser] took no further steps in the business, but ... the loss preyed upon his mind and caused him great anguish" (Crowe, 1859a: 177).

Materialist capitalist discourse, unlike spiritualist discourse, views reason superior to feelings. Therefore, capitalist-minded people were supposed to be rational and unsentimental. The old miser, who represents capitalist values, is devoid of sentimental feelings. Since his spiritual side is deflated, he does not feel any compassion for his widowed sister. He also rejects helping her son Arthur, an honest young man representing morality and spirituality, to become a successful tradesman for "he did not want to promote anybody's interest but his own" (Crowe, 1859a: 178). Ferraldi's selfish and unsentimental demeanour is in parallel with capitalist teaching that praises practicality and pragmatism. The old man's selfishness is also conflated with paranoia as he suspects that his nephew will take his money. Being unaware of the extent of his uncle's "mania," Arthur becomes surprised at the miser's stately, reserved, and distant manners: "[H]is joyous anticipations were somewhat damped when he found himself so

coldly received, and when he looked into those hard grey eyes and contracted features [of his uncle] that had never expanded with a genial smile” (1859a: 179). Representing pure reason and pragmatism, which are valued by capitalist discourse, Ferraldi is contrasted to Arthur, a well-behaved, amiable man, who is associated with sentimentality, morality, and spirituality. Since the young man has been “[w]ell brought up and well instructed,” he becomes a well-mannered and considerate person whose moral and spiritual sides have been cultivated (1859a: 179, 184).

Being a selfless, well-meaning man, Arthur challenges the ideals of capitalist discourse that encourages individuals to be self-interested. He, unlike his uncle, is not captivated by self-interest, but considers his family’s welfare. Therefore, he plans to invest his money in commercial pursuits “not for his own sake alone,” but also for his poor mother and sister (Crowe, 1859a: 178). As such, his virtuous and sentimental nature is contrasted with his uncle’s selfishness, and his manipulative, egocentric character (1859a: 180). Since Ferraldi has a materialist, capitalist outlook, he views his nephew not as a young man needing his commercial advice but as a means to be manipulated to compensate for his lost money. Hence, he poisons Arthur and feels no remorse for killing him, but, instead, reveals his pleasure of usurping the young man’s money: “I counted my two thousand pounds again and again, and I kept gloating over the recovery of it—for I felt as if it was my own money, and that I had a right to seize it where I could” (1859a: 181-182). Unveiling the moral and spiritual decadence brought about by the miser’s ambition for money, “The Italian’s Story” argues capitalist materialist discourse respects individual benefit and personal success rather than shared benefit and common interest.

“The Italian’s Story” invalidates the miser’s materialist outlook, using an immaterial figure that reproaches the old man for his indulgence for money. Representing materialist capitalist view, Ferraldi does not believe in immaterial entities. Unlike spiritualists, who accept the presence of immaterial reality that cannot be grasped by human reason, the old man is so indulged in material wealth that he does not dwell on the things that transcend his understanding. The conflict between spiritualist and materialist views gets explicit when the miser is introduced to immaterial reality. When Ferraldi sees his nephew’s ghost haunting his estate, he gets anxious as the ghost does not belong to the capitalist materialist world whose values he adopts. Since the old man defends materialist discourse that ignores spiritual reality, he feels threatened on meeting the spectre of Arthur, who stands for spiritual and moral values:

As I was about to sit down, he [Arthur] entered and took a chair opposite me, an unbidden guest. I ceased dining at home, but it made no difference; he came, dine where I would. This preyed upon me; I tried not to mind, but I could not help it. Argument was vain. I lost my appetite, and was reduced nearly to death's door. (Crowe, 1859a: 182).

As the miser cannot grasp immaterial reality, he is vulnerable to the ghost's intrusions into the material world. Regarding the spectre as an alien figure, Ferraldi is dominated by its spiritual power, which "chilled the marrow of [his] bones" (Crowe, 1859a: 183). Ferraldi's introduction to immaterial reality, in turn, proves that capitalist materialist discourse which deals with the tangible, concrete reality that can be explained by reason is restricted in that it cannot explain spiritual and intangible phenomenon. As such, the ghost, which intrudes into the material world, is used as a means to support spiritualist discourse that argues about the existence of immaterial beings which can be explained through intuition. It also shows the extent of capitalist ambition to get more money since it reminds the old man of his guilt of murder committed due to his love of material wealth.

The popularity of spiritualism coincided with the decay in Christian church, which was corrupted by clerics that failed to "conform to what they considered as Christ's central message- that each of us treat our fellow humans as we would be treated, with justice and compassion" (Olson, 2006: 19). In *Spiritualism, and the Age We Live in* Catherine Crowe (1859b) claims that religion was unable to deal with the moral corruption or spiritual crisis experienced in nineteenth-century society as it was no longer an agent of curing people's souls (23). According to her, men of religion were morally corrupted in that they exploited capitalist materialist idea based on domination, ambition, self-interest, rivalry and indulgence in money and reduced religion to a state apparatus to control the citizens (1859b: 23). Since Crowe (1859b) thinks that religion is incapable of cultivating moral and spiritual aspects of human beings, she argues for spiritualism that aims to fight against "the total ignorance which ... prevails regarding our spiritual nature and origin" so as to reveal "man's real relation to God" (9, 12). She maintains that spiritualism directs people to adopt God's facts words that "must be good" rather than religious dogmas imposed by political and religious authorities that manipulate religion as a control mechanism (1859b: 13). Therefore, she asserts that moral and spiritual problems can be cured if people reject believing in religious dogmas and doubt the validity of dogmatic religious works that dictate people to trust what they say without question (1859b: 26, 27).



“The Italian’s Story” deals with the corruption in the Church through Ferraldi’s relationship with a priest. Ferraldi determines to settle his case with his deceased nephew for he gets uneasy due to the presence of an intangible, enigmatic entity. Hence, he tries to seek comfort through religion, which he associates with the spiritual. However, the priest he chooses for consultation is a spendthrift, who has wasted his father’s properties and then decided to be a clergyman to earn his living. Having indulged in money and leisure, the priest epitomises the corruption in Christian faith. As such, his advice about penitence lacks sincerity, and it is inefficient to persuade the miser to repent his crime: “He [the priest] recommended repentance and restitution. I tried, but I could not repent, for I had got the money” (Crowe, 1859a: 182-183). To be relieved from the distressing presence of the ghost, Ferraldi decides to get rid of the money in turn of a good bargain:

I thought, perhaps, if I parted with it [money] to another, I might be released; so I looked about for an advantageous purchase, and hearing that Bartolomeo Malfi was in difficulties, I offered him two thousand pounds, money down, for his land—I knew it was worth three times the sum. (Crowe, 1859a: 183)

Ferraldi’s manipulation of the concept of penitence is an example of religious hypocrisy that is condemned by spiritualist discourse. Since the priest and the religious doctrines, he represents fail to secure the moral and spiritual transformation of the miser, it is argued that religion exploited by the clergy cannot propose a true solution to moral and spiritual corruption. It is when Old Ferraldi determines to return the money to Arthur’s mother and sister to purify his soul that he no longer sees the spectre of his nephew, which reminds him of his crime committed due to his love for money (1859a: 185). Ferraldi’s recovery thanks to his determination to amend his former guilt is in parallel with spiritualist discourse that claims moral and spiritual salvation is only possible through the purification of the spirit.

Although the miser determines to give money to his nephew’s family to have spiritual peace, he is overwhelmed by his passion for money, and feels agitated at the idea of parting with his pounds (Crowe, 1859a: 185). His growing obsession with money, on the other hand, leads to further deterioration in his mental state. His mind gets occupied with the idea that the men who have carried his chest containing his pounds to his sister’s house might be robbers. His suspicions come true, and he is murdered by the two men for his money. The miser’s assassination proves the futility of capitalist ambition and the invalidity of the capitalist discourse that bases happiness on individual success and economic power. Moreover, Ferraldi’s obsession with money brings about the execution of his sister and her family that were accused of the murder of old man. The extinction



of the miser's close relatives indicates that innocent people are victimised due to capitalist materialist indulgence. On the other hand, the succession of Ferraldi's poor cousin to his properties marks a departure from capitalist way of life for "the public ... was glad to see the estate fall into the hands of his successor, who appears to have made a much better use of his riches" (1859a: 188). Therefore, the death of the old man, who represents capitalist values and spiritual decadence, heralds renewal, moral and spiritual amelioration.

### **MOVEMENT TOWARDS A MATERIALIST-SCIENTIFIC SOCIETY**

Believing that science is inadequate to explain spiritual phenomena, Crowe (1859b) contemplates that although hard logic defended by science is able to supply people with some physical comforts, advancement of science is unable to cure the spiritual and moral decadence of people (49, 48). Accordingly, Crowe (1848) argues that scientists should have the eagerness to accept the possibility of the presence of immaterial reality instead of disregarding the spiritual and supernatural as mere prodigies (5-6). She also maintains that scientists reduce immaterial truths "within the bounds of science" (1848: 17). Therefore, they define spirits that cannot be explained through science and reason as "nervous or sanguineous derangement," and "mere subjective illusions" (Crowe, 1848: 21). However, Crowe (1859b) discusses the incapacity of reason to perceive all phenomena on earth: "[C]onsidering how insignificant is the learning of the most learned man that lives; how inevitably ignorant he must be of many things ... It would be wonderful that man should continue so obstinate in his rejection of new truths" (71). Accordingly, she asserts that spiritual or supernatural phenomena cannot be grasped completely and adequately through human reason, but one needs to use "experience, observation, and intuition" as well as reason to investigate immaterial reality (1848: 3).

Crowe's "The Italian's Story" enacts the advance from pre-scientific to scientific era and the conflict between the spiritualist and scientific discourses. The old miser's death signs the end of the first part of the story, which takes place in the late sixteenth century, the early modern age, which was a transitory period between pre-scientific and scientific eras. The second part, which tells mainly the story of Count Francesco Ferraldi, a relative of the miser's, takes place in the nineteenth century, the modern scientific age. This part witnessed the struggle between spiritualism and science, which questions the presence of immaterial phenomena. Count Ferraldi represents this struggle between scientific and spiritualist discourses since although he lives in the modern, scientific age, he has a tendency towards spiritualist discourse that points to the existence of immaterial figures. He is brought up with the ghost stories about the murder of young Arthur and he admits his belief in the spirits by alluding to his childhood fears about the room where old Ferraldi killed his nephew:

[T]he room was shut up being said to be haunted. I never saw anything extraordinary, but I can bear witness to the frightful groans and moans that issued from it sometimes at night ... I never passed the door alone, nor would any of the servants do so after dark. (Crowe, 1859a: 188-189)

Francesco was not the only person who was disturbed by the unquiet spectre, but his father and his servants were also disrupted by the presence of the ghost. While his father walled up the door to suppress the moaning of the ghost, the servants preferred not to approach the room after dark. Francesco is so obsessed with the story of Arthur's ghost that as a mature man he wonders "whether the ghost continues to annoy the [new] inmates [of the house] by his lamentations" (Crowe, 1859a: 189).

The conflict between spiritualist and scientific discourses in the nineteenth century is also indicated through the difference between the Ferraldis, who believe in the supernatural, and Greatheads, who are closer to modern scientific discourse that ignores the idea of spiritual beings. The Greatheads inhabit the country house where old Ferraldi was killed. Old Mr. Greathead, who does not have an explicit tendency towards spiritualist discourse, disregards the tales about the miser's ghost haunting his house and builds a "modern" estate where the miser was murdered and intends to make alterations around the place, removing the hedge and an old tombstone (1859a: 195). Nonetheless, he changes his mind, which makes his neighbours assert that he has seen the ghost, though he does not personally accept the claim (1859a: 201). Like Mr. Greathead, his successors feel the same dilemma about the ghost, thus "[the] hedge has always been maintained by the proprietors of the place" (Crowe, 1859a: 201). However, Greathead's grandson, who befriends Count Francesco Ferraldi, adopts materialist-scientific discourse that declines the idea of a spectre. Therefore, he determines to demolish the hedge to rearrange the surroundings of the house. Representing the scientific view, Mr. Greathead does not have a spiritualist vision, and he does not associate the coins found upon the removal of the hedge with the miser but assumes that they have found some treasure (Crowe, 1859a: 202). On the other hand, the villagers, who stand for the "illiterate" mass despised by "the Victorian intelligentsia," adopt spiritualist discourse (Marroni, 2010: 23). Since they, unlike Greathead's scientific-minded grandson, believe in the spiritual, they think that the ghost of old Ferraldi wanders around the Greatheads' estate:

When the villagers heard of this money being discovered, they all looked upon it as the explanation of the old gentleman haunting that particular spot. No doubt he had buried the money, and it remained to be seen, whether now, that it was found, his spirit would be at rest. (Crowe, 1859a: 203)

As the villagers claim to have observed the old man's ghost, it is maintained that spiritual reality cannot be ignored although materialist-scientific discourse views it as a supernatural phenomenon that cannot be explained through reason. Depicting the opposition between the Ferraldis, villagers, and the Greatheads, the story displays the conflict between spiritualist and scientific discourses in the mid-nineteenth century, which witnessed scientific developments and the debates about the decline of faith in the spiritual.

In "The Italian's Story" the disparity between female characters who adopt spiritualist discourse and male characters who adopt scientific discourse also points to the conflict between spiritualist and scientific views. In the Victorian period, women were associated with irrationality, and they were considered to be "mentally inferior to men," who were related with science and reason (King, 2005: 38). The claim about women's intellectual inferiority was justified through scientific discourse of the nineteenth century. It was believed that women were mentally inferior to men as the weight of a woman's brain is less than that of a man's (Nassar, 2004: 95). Darwin, an eminent English naturalist, emphasises men's mental superiority, and claims that "the average standard of mental power in man must be above that of woman" (1874: 559). Spiritualist discourse, on the other hand, subverts conventional gender binaries since it "privileged women" as mediums who mediated between world of spirits and human beings, and "validated the female authoritative voice" through attributing an active role to women who are subjugated in the male-dominated society (Owen, 2004: 4, 6). Spiritualists also demanded equal rights for each individual and argued for women's control over their bodies for they believed women's assumed psychical inferiority has been imposed by patriarchal society (Braude, 2001: 142). Arguing that people mirror "the image of God and the laws of nature", spiritualists maintained that each individual is naturally healthy, therefore they opposed medical discourse which discussed women are prone to insanity, hysteria, and "emotional instability" due to their reproductive system and menstrual cycle (Braude, 2001: 144; Ehnenn, 2008: 101).

Catherine Crowe's story has female characters that openly show their interest in the immaterial. In this case, the writer shows the difference between the spiritualist discourse of women and the materialist discourse of scientific

men cherished by nineteenth-century patriarchal ideology. Mrs. Greathead, the mistress of the Greatheads' country house, represents nineteenth-century women stigmatized as irrational beings by 'rational' men. Unlike her scientific husband, she adopts spiritualist discourse that argues paranormal incidents that transcend reason are a part of reality. Therefore, she expresses her dissatisfaction with her husband's decision to remove the old hedge, which she believes to be possessed by the miser's spirit. Her son Harry, who is introduced as a man of reason, ridicules her for being "afraid of offending the ghost" (Crowe, 1859a: 196). The conflict between the mother, who believes in spiritual beings, and her son, who rejects immaterial reality, enacts the opposition between spiritualist and scientific, materialist discourses. Moreover, the fact that Mrs. Greathead cannot express her genuine ideas about the apparition explains her fear of being labelled as a superstitious woman by 'rational' men who "laugh at the idea of anybody believing in a ghost" (Crowe, 1859a: 197). However, when Count Ferraldi gains her confidence by declaring his belief in ghosts, she admits that although her husband and son ignore spiritual reality and mock her for being superstitious, she is convinced about the presence of spirits. She tells about her encounter with a ghost near the hedge to justify her faith in the paranormal:

"[I saw] an old man, withered and thin, dressed in a curious antique fashion, with a high peaked hat on his head. ... The old man walked from one side of the hedge to that stone, and seemed to be counting his steps. ... I was just going to advance, and ask him what he was doing? [sic] when I felt my sister's hand relax the hold she had of my arm, and she sank to the ground; at the same instant I lost sight of the mysterious old man, who suddenly disappeared." (Crowe, 1859a: 198-199)

Mrs. Greathead and her sister are mocked by men when they go back to house and explain what they have seen in the garden, and they are reduced to irrational creatures that suffer from hallucinations (Crowe, 1859a: 200). However, Mrs. Greathead is assured by a nurse from the village about the existence of an uneasy ghost seen around their house. The nurse also adds that her mother has told her "the old man became very troublesome, and was even seen in the house" when the old Mr. Greathead decided to remove the hedge, and this strange event was reported by the neighbours (Crowe, 1859a: 200-201). Although Mrs. Greathead tries to convince her sons by referring to the experiences of other women, "[t]he young men laughed and quizzed their mother for indulging in such superstitions" (Crowe, 1859a: 201). Her sons reject believing her for she is unable to produce material, measurable, and verifiable evidence that are valued by scientific, materialist discourse as the only sources to explain material reality. However,

since Mrs. Greathead, her sister, the nurse, and her mother, like the villagers, claim to have seen the old man's ghost, the possibility of the manifestation of a paranormal figure is put forward.

## **CONCLUSION**

Displaying the controversy between spiritualism, capitalism, and science, Catherine Crowe's "The Italian's Story" reveals mainly the constraints on capitalist and scientific discourses that ignore spiritual and immaterial reality which can be perceived by intuition and spiritual experiences. As a spiritualist, Crowe argues that although the presence of spiritual phenomena cannot be explained from capitalist and scientific perspectives, spiritual reality cannot be disregarded. Accordingly, the old miser, who indulges in material entities, stands for practical rationality that disregards spirituality. Being a materialist, capitalist man valuing solely material entities, the old man also represents moral and spiritual decadence caused due to materialist, capitalist discourse that puts self-interest and rivalry before the cultivation of soul and morals. Old Ferraldi's ambition for material wealth is shown as the cause of his deterioration into a murderer who kills his own nephew for money. On the other hand, the spectre of his nephew, which reminds Ferraldi of his corrupted nature, is used as a means to verify spiritual reality and describe the moral corruption caused by capitalist greed. The old man, who ignores spirituality and immateriality, is introduced to immaterial reality through the apparition of his nephew. Crowe also points to the corruption in the Church through the case of the old miser, who cannot find solace for his crime through religion which is manipulated by corrupted clerics. Moreover, she points to the invalidity of materialist, capitalist discourse that bases human happiness on money and physical comforts through the murder of Ferraldi, who loses his peace and life as a result of his indulgence in material wealth.

The apparition of the miser's spectre in the second part of the story that takes place in the nineteenth century characterized by scientific developments is functional. The debates over the presence of the ghost of Old Ferraldi enact the conflict between nineteenth-century scientific discourse, which disregards immaterial reality, and spiritualist discourse, which argues about the existence of paranormal figures that cannot be grasped by human reason. While Mr. Greathead and his sons, who inhabit the estate where the ghost is claimed to have been seen, dismay the idea of a psychic creature by using scientific discourse, the villagers, who adopt spiritualist discourse insist on the probability of the existence of an immaterial entity that transcend logic. Female characters, who declare their belief in the spiritual, are also involved in the discussions about the miser's ghost. Representing nineteenth-century women stigmatised as irrational creatures by patriarchal society, Mrs. Greathead, unlike her husband and sons who ignore immaterial reality, uses a spiritualist discourse to justify her belief

in the presence of the spectre of Ferraldi, which cannot be explained through scientific discourse that deal with the material world. Since both the villagers and female characters claim to have seen the ghost, the possibility of the existence of immaterial figures is introduced. Consequently, “The Italian’s Story” shows that discourses used by capitalist and scientific men disdain paranormal reality and proclaim the superiority of rationality against spirituality and intuition associated with immateriality and irrationality. However, it is asserted that immaterial reality cannot be completely denied although materialist-scientific discourse ignores spiritual reality as an enigma that cannot be explained through reason.

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