

Opinion Article

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On the Composition of Ghosts

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Received Date: November 01, 2023

Published Date: November 16, 2023

Introduction

Linguistics on the word ghost show they were once linked to a Flemish word gast and German word gas for being scared. Ghosts were linked to being scared of sounds linked to Old English words.

Discussion

The height of the Ghost movement was the spiritualist move

ment linked to the 3 Fox Sisters of Lilly Dale in the Southwestern part of New York State. The Spiritualist movement was linked to a worldwide movement linked to about 8 million people in the late 19th century in Brazil, New York state and Arthur Conan Doyle. Followers were Allen Kardec and parts of Brazil and Harry Houdini who attended séances to speak the dead. One of the studies of ghosts involved Ectoplasm.



PLATE XV
"Phantoms" photographed during a *séance* with Mrs. Duncan at her home. Note mask-like faces, "coat-hanger" shoulders, and sharp and weft of material.

Figure 1: Ectoplasm (paranormal)

Helen Duncan was well known for using dolls and other props as ectoplasm in her séances. Ectoplasm (from Greek *ektos* 'outside' and plasma 'something formed or molded') is a term used in spiritualism to denote a substance or spiritual energy "exteriorized" by physical mediums. It was coined in 1894 by psychological researcher Charles Richet. Although the term is widespread in popular culture, there is no scientific evidence that ectoplasm exists and many purported examples were exposed as hoaxes fashioned from cheese-cloth, gauze or other natural substances. Ghosts were and are linked to common characteristics.

Common Attributes

Another widespread belief concerning ghosts is that they are composed of a misty, airy, or subtle material. Anthropologists link this idea to early beliefs that ghosts were the person within the person (the person's spirit), most noticeable in ancient cultures as a person's breath, which upon exhaling in colder climates appears visibly as a white mist. This belief may have also fostered the metaphorical meaning of "breath" in certain languages, such as the Latin *spiritus* and the Greek *pneuma*, which by analogy became extended to mean the soul. In the Bible, God is depicted as synthesizing Adam, as a living soul, from the dust of the Earth and the breath of God. Ghosts are also linked to common language of *gast* meaning a sound in Flemish and German.

Connected the Term Gast

"The English word *ghost* continues Old English *gāst*. Stemming from Proto-Germanic **gaistaz*, it is cognate with Old Frisian *gāst*, Old Saxon *gēst*, Old Dutch *gēst*, and Old High German *geist*. Although this form is not attested in North Germanic and East Germanic languages (the equivalent word in Gothic is *ahma*, Old Norse has *andi*

m., önd f.), it appears to be a dental suffix derivative of pre-Germanic **ghois-d-oz* ('fury, anger'), which is comparable to Sanskrit *hédas* ('anger') and Avestan *zōižda-* ('terrible, ugly'). The prior Proto-Indo-European form is reconstructed as **ǵ^héys-d-os*, from the root **ǵ^héys-*, which is reflected in Old Norse *geisa* ('to rage') and **geisk-ki* ('fear'; cf. *geiskafullr* 'full of fear'), in Gothic *usgaisjan* ('to terrify') and *usgaisnan* ('to be terrified'), as well as in Avestan *zōiš-* (cf. *zōišnu* 'shivering, trembling').

Besides denoting the human spirit or soul, both of the living and the deceased, the Old English word is used as a synonym of Latin *spiritus* also in the meaning of "breath" or "blast" from the earliest attestations (9th century). It could also denote any good or evil spirit, such as angels and demons; the Anglo-Saxon gospel refers to the demonic possession of Matthew 12:43 as se *unclæna gast*. Also from the Old English period, the word could denote the spirit of God, viz. the "Holy Ghost".

Conclusion

We can conclude ghosts are composed of sounds and airy breath like gas like material. The one advance we make in ghost science is that ghosts were commonly linked to breath, spirit, gas or airy materials. Ghosts were also linked to sound and gas. We can say we advanced the theory of ghost science by saying ghosts were composed of sound, gas, spirit. Air, and being scared.

Conflict of Interest

None.

Acknowledgment

None.