

Celebrating Susy Smith's Soul: Preliminary Evidence for the Continuance of Smith's Consciousness After Her Physical Death¹

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Abstract: Immediately following the death of Susy Smith, it was possible to conduct two experiments to see if evidence of her continued consciousness could be obtained. Experiment I involved a single-blind design with an experienced research medium who serves as Chairperson of the Mediumship Research Committee in the Human Energy Systems Laboratory at the University of Arizona. Experiment II was partially blind and included two new research mediums who were blind to the name and history of the deceased person (Smith). The findings from both experiments provided strong evidence for the continuance of information about Smith. It is hoped that the publication of these findings will encourage scientists and spiritual leaders to bring Smith's afterlife codes experiment and the Susy Smith Project to the attention of mediums and students.

"I don't walk alone." — Message reported by a research medium purportedly from Susy Smith two days after she died.

Introduction

On February 11, 2001, Susy Smith, the author of 30 published books on parapsychology and survival of consciousness after physical death, had a massive heart attack during dinner and passed away. She was 89 years old. She was to be honored on March 8, 2001 at The Great Debate, a dialogue between a leading medium (Laurie Campbell), a celebrated skeptic (Ray Hyman, Ph.D.), and a well known scientist (Gary E. R. Schwartz, Ph.D.) at the Duval Auditorium at the University of Arizona Health Sciences Center.

Susy Smith had been looking forward to her passing. She had designed (1) initially with the collaboration of members of the Board of Directors of the Survival Research Foundation in 1971, and (2) recently with the authors of this article (Schwartz and Russek, 1997), a controlled afterlife codes experiment. Smith had offered a \$10,000 prize to anyone who could successfully receive her secret message. Smith's experiment operates on the web (www.afterlifecodes.com) as part of the Susy Smith Project in the Human Energy Systems Laboratory. It is described in detail in her last published book (Smith, 2000).

The present article honors Smith, who Russek calls "the matriarch of survival research." It presents preliminary findings obtained with the collaboration of three research-oriented mediums that provide support for the hypothesis that Susy's consciousness has continued since her

passing. We are submitting these preliminary findings to encourage the scientific and spiritual community to take Smith's afterlife codes challenge seriously.

Overview to the two experiments

Experiment I with Medium 1 (Laurie Campbell, Chair of the Mediumship Research Committee in the Human Energy Systems Laboratory at the University of Arizona) was designed specifically to test whether evidence for Smith's continuance of consciousness could be obtained under highly controlled conditions. Experiment II with Mediums 2 and 3 (Allison Klupar and Catherine Yunt) occurred fortuitously and under less controlled experimental conditions. However, it provides important independent evidence concerning Smith that replicated and extended information received by Medium 1. Experiment I with Medium 1 is termed the Primary Experiment. Experiment II with Mediums 2 and 3 is termed the Secondary Experiment.

Experiment I (Primary)

Design

The experiment was a replication of a portion of Schwartz and Russek (2001). The experiment was conducted single-blind. Medium 1, who lives in Irvine, California, was contacted by telephone by Russek on the morning of February 12, approximately 18 hours after Smith's fatal heart attack. Medium 1 was informed that we wished to conduct an experiment on the evening of February 12 that would replicate Schwartz and Russek (2001). It was feasible for Medium 1 to schedule her time to conduct a reading that evening at 8:00 P.M. Pacific Standard Time.

Medium 1 was informed she would not know who the sitter would be (the typical laboratory procedure). She was informed that Russek would be the experimenter, and that Russek would tape the session in Tucson, Arizona.

Medium 1 was instructed that one half hour before the scheduled phone call, she was to conduct a contemplation period. (Medium 1 calls this her meditation period.) She was to write down whatever information she received about deceased friends and/or family member of the sitter whom she was preparing to read. Medium 1 was told that the sitter was inviting a few departed people in his or her mind (termed departed hypothesized co-investigators -DPHCI's - Schwartz et al, 1999; 2001; Schwartz and Russek, 1999).

Medium 1 was told that Russek would call her at 8:00 P.M. and tape record the reading. Medium 1 was instructed that she would first read out loud what she had received from 7:30 to 8:00 P.M. during the contemplation period. She was then to conduct a 10-15 minute reading where she was not allowed to ask any questions of the sitter, and the sitter was not allowed to speak.

Medium 1 did not know the age or gender of the sitter, where the

sitter was located (in Tucson or elsewhere in the country), and the sitter's beliefs. Hence, the medium was completely blind to the identity of the sitter. The reading lasted longer than anticipated (approximately 45 minutes).

Unbeknownst to the medium, the sitter was quietly listening to the reading via a speakerphone, as the reading transpired. The sitter was the first author (Schwartz), who Susy Smith affectionately considered to be one of her "illegitimate grandchildren" (see Smith, 2000).

The sitter (Schwartz) had secretly invited, in his head, three specific DPHCI's to attend:

1. Susy Smith (the primary DPHCI)
2. William James, MD (the distinguished professor from Harvard, the secondary DPHCI, who Smith claimed that she wrote two books with after James died (reviewed in Smith, 2000) and who has appeared in prior mediumship research in the laboratory; Schwartz et al, 1999; Schwartz and Russek, 1999).
3. Henry I. Russek, MD (Russek's father, a renowned cardiologist, scientist, and educator, the third DPHCI, who Smith claimed she could communicate with and who also has appeared in prior mediumship research in the laboratory Schwartz et al, 1999; Schwartz and Russek, 1999).

The experimenter (Russek) knew that the sitter was inviting DPHCI 1 but not DPHCI's 2 and 3. The data reported below are summarized from the transcripts and the written notes of the sitter. They refer to all specific information reported by the Medium concerning Smith (the primary DPHCI in this report).

Results

Medium 1 reported the following information, summarized over the two parts of the reading (Part I, the contemplation period; Part II, the sitter-silent period). Next to each piece of information, commentary about its accuracy is presented. All information is reported. Some of the information is clearly general and applies widely, other information is more specific.

Interestingly, the totality of the information turned out to match what the authors know about Smith with high accuracy:

1. There was a grandmother figure (true – not terribly specific, but appropriate for Smith).
2. She had white hair (true – and typical for grandmothers).
3. She was short (true, at this stage in her life – and typical for grandmothers).
4. She wore long dresses (true – also typical of grandmothers).
5. When she was younger, she had auburn/red hair (true – and more specific).
6. She had trouble with her legs and feet, and showed herself "shuffling" when walked (true – common for grandmothers, but very spe-

cific for Smith – she had been in a wheelchair for years and had great difficulty walking).

7. She died recently, within the past six months (true – and fairly specific).

8. She cared deeply about meditation (mentioned multiple times, true and highly specific – Smith wrote about meditation often in her books on mediumship, and she learned to meditate herself to develop her purported mediumship skills).

9. She got involved with vitamins and herbs toward the latter part of her life (true and specific).

10. She loved food, particularly simple foods (true and specific).

11. She had a passion for flowers – Medium 1 said she could smell flowers around her (Medium 2, see below, reported the same information). Medium 1 mentioned roses (true – Smith loved flowers so much that she painted them).

12. Medium 1 saw Smith dancing (true – one of Smith's three wishes was to spend the first year, after she died, "dancing with William James"; Smith was lame for much of her adult life, and as mentioned above, was restricted to a wheelchair for the last years of her life).

13. Medium 1 saw Smith with a new born baby (true – the second of Smith's three wishes was to raise a child; she never had children or grandchildren herself).

14. Medium 1 saw Smith surrounded by people who were "watchers" and gave many names, including Robert, William, Edward – common names without relationship (true – Smith wrote about many people with such names in her books; Smith claimed that many people she knew in this life were waiting for her to die so that together they could help communicate her secret phrase from the other side).

15. Medium 1 heard an unusual name that sounded like "Osborne" (true – Smith's second book, *The Mediumship of Mrs. Leonard* (see Smith, 2000) is a biography of one of England's most celebrated and investigated mediums; her middle name is Osborne).

16. Medium 1 saw the grandmother as spending time in California, New York, England, and traveling extensively (true – see Smith, 2000).

17. Medium 1 reported the specific names Elizabeth and Margaret one after the other (true – Elizabeth is the name of Smith's mother who she was purportedly in contact with for 45 years after her mother's passing; Margaret was Elizabeth and Susy's dear friend).

18. Medium 1 said that this woman was an inspiration; she mentioned this many times (true – Smith was a pioneer, devoted to research in parapsychology and the survival hypothesis). Even at her last book signing at Borders in February, 2001, she inspired her audience. (A videotape of her last book signing is available.)

19. Medium 1 mentioned substantial information about this woman being interested in quantum physics, science, eternity and timelessness, frequencies, and the like (true – Smith became interested in the topic of

survival after reading White's classic *The Unobstructed Universe*; Smith emphasizes physics in the first chapter of *The Afterlife Codes*.

20. Medium 1 mentioned seeing William James at various times in the reading (true – he was associated with Smith, and he was also invited by the sitter).

21. Medium 2 was surprised that Dr. Henry I. Russek asserted himself in the reading a couple of times, and she commented on this to the second author ("I don't understand why your father is showing up in this reading.") (true – he was invited by the sitter).

22. Medium 2 mentioned a few times that something to do with this sitter was a "big key" to research in this area (true – interesting choice of words; the cover of Smith's *The Afterlife Code* shows a large skeleton key).

23. Medium commented at one point "I don't understand this, but this reading is less like a reading and more like a book!" (true – Susy's life was books).

The above are, to the best of our knowledge, all of the specific facts mentioned by Medium 1 concerning the "grandmother." There were no specific facts mentioned by Medium 1 concerning the grandmother figure that did not directly or indirectly apply to Smith. Though some of the facts are general and could apply to most deceased older women, the constellation of the facts happen to precisely match the woman being honored in this article.

Also, at no time did Medium 1 mention deceased children, nor did she report any details about deceased parents or grandfathers. Only a deceased grandmother, plus William James, Henry I. Russek, and various names as mentioned above. Her accuracy regarding the sitter and his intentions for the reading are important. At the time this manuscript was being prepared for publication (five days after Smith's death), Medium 1 had not yet been told that Smith died. However, the night immediately after the reading, Russek spoke with Medium 1 who had just come down with the flu. Medium 1 commented "Was last night's reading okay? I told my sister 'If the sitter was a lady from Kansas, I really missed this one!'" Medium 1 was told that her reading was excellent, and that we would inform her of the details after the experiment was completed. Note that Medium 1 did not mention the grandmother's name. In Experiment II, Medium 2 and 3 were specifically asked the name of the deceased person; curiously, neither received a name either. Also, none of the mediums reported anything about a possible secret phrase or code.

Experiment II (Secondary)

Design

On February 13, the morning after Experiment I, Schwartz had a meeting with two mediums from Phoenix, Arizona. Their appointment had been scheduled by Schwartz's administrative assistant a few weeks earlier. The mediums indicated their serious interest in research, and

wished to participate in future studies.

The opportunity presented itself to do a partial replication and extension experiment. For obvious reasons, it was not possible to do a pre-reading contemplation period with these mediums, and the mediums were not blind to the identity of the sitter. Schwartz told the mediums the following: "Two nights ago, a person I was close to died. Can you receive any information about this individual?"

Schwartz explained that he would provide no information about who the deceased person was until all information had been received. The mediums were not allowed to ask any questions. Schwartz kept his nonverbal cues to a minimum. He provided little (if any) nonverbal information about accuracy while the information was being reported.

The following information was received by the two mediums.

Medium 2 reported:

1. There was a deceased grandmother (true – replicating Medium 1).
2. The woman was short (true – replicating Medium 1).
3. The woman was surrounded by flowers, especially roses (true – replicating Medium 1).
4. The woman died quickly in the chest area (true, but not specific as heart disease is the number one killer).
5. The woman cared about the sitter, but used to tease him (true and specific to Smith).
6. The grandmother was in the presence of a young deceased child (true – replicating Medium's 1 comment about a baby; Smith's dream to take care of a deceased child).
7. "She is showing me a newspaper. That is very strange." (true – for many years, Smith was a newspaper reporter.).

Medium 3 purportedly confirmed what Medium 2 was saying, and added:

1. The woman smelled the flowers strongly, which is unusual for Medium 3 (true in the sense of replicating Medium 1).
2. In the newspaper was an obituary that was significant to the sitter (true – Smith had written the obituary herself five years ago, and Schwartz had forwarded it to the Executor of her estate to have published in the newspaper). At the time the reading occurred, Schwartz had not yet purchased the Arizona Daily Star to see if it had been published. He learned in the afternoon that Smith's obituary had been published.
3. The deceased grandmother had a manuscript, completely written, that the sitter was aware of (true – her 31st book, a novel about the afterlife).
4. The deceased grandmother wanted this manuscript published, in her honor (true – interestingly, the sitter had that very morning thought about ways to have her book published).
5. "My guides are telling me that Medium 2 has one more piece of information to share" before the sitter was to tell them who the deceased

person was.

Medium 2 then reported the following:

1. The deceased is telling me, over and over, that I must share the following: "I don't walk alone." (true – Smith's dream was to be able to walk again, freely, with her deceased loved ones.)

Note that neither Medium 2 or 3 reported a deceased grandfather, or deceased parents, children, or friends. Like Medium 1, virtually all the information for Mediums 2 and 3 fit Smith, including novel information (e.g. the newspaper, the obituary, and the unpublished manuscript) that was highly specific to Smith. However, as mentioned above, when the sitter asked the mediums to attempt to provide the grandmother's name, neither received any names. The mediums claimed that they had not read the Schwartz and Russek (1999) book and knew nothing about Smith or her death.

Discussion

Experiment I was a carefully planned and executed as a single-blind experiment. The data received by Medium 1 was, in total, remarkably consistent with Smith and her life. Medium 1 has performed exceptionally well in previous studies (Schwartz et al 1999; 2001; Schwartz and Russek, 1999; 2001), including research conducted collaboratively with Smith (reviewed in Schwartz and Russek, 1999, chapter 9). Her accuracy level, though striking in this article, is typical of her current skills.

Note that Medium 1 was over 1,000 miles from the experimenter (Russek) and the sitter (Schwartz) at the time the single-blind reading was performed. This did not appear to provide an impediment to her obtaining specific and meaningful information about Smith.

The findings in Experiment II were surprising. Not only was the experiment unplanned by the experimenter (who was also the sitter in this case), but Schwartz did not have prior documented evidence of the mediums' potential talent. The reading was kept brief; it lasted for ten minutes. Schwartz asked only one question at the end of the reading (could either medium receive the deceased's name). Neither medium received any information about the name.

The combination of Experiments I and II provide compelling preliminary evidence that information about Smith has continued after her death. The possibility of (1) fraud on the part of the three mediums, (2) cold-reading, (3) selective memory on the part of the sitter, (4) experimenter error, or (5) "fishing for information" on the part of the mediums, have been essentially ruled out. Except for skeptical speculations about possible experimenter fraud (which we state categorically did not occur), the remaining hypotheses include (1) telepathy with the experimenter and/or sitter, (2) super-psi (super ESP, extended memory network resonance in the vacuum of space; Braude, 1992) and/or (3) the continuance of a living consciousness (see Schwartz and Russek, 1999; 2001).

It is improbable that telepathy with the conscious mind of the experimenter and/or sitter can explain all of the data. Some of the information was frankly surprising (e.g., the "watchers" in Experiment I, and the unusual name "Osborne" that the experimenters had to look up after the reading; or the meaningful phrase "I don't walk alone" provided at the end of the reading) and was not part of the consciousness of the experimenter and/or sitter. Also, strong aspects of the experimenter's and sitter's conscious thoughts were consistently missed (e.g., the name "Susy").

Two weeks after the data reported in this article were collected, Medium 1 spent the weekend in Tucson conducting a triple-blind mediumship experiment. After the formal experimentation was completed, Schwartz replicated the partial-blind procedure he used with Medium's 2 and 3. He told Medium 1 that someone who was close to him had died a couple of weeks ago. The session was videotaped.

Medium 1 provided additional veridical information (e.g., that an older woman died from a massive heart attack that felt like "an elephant was sitting on her chest"; that she was in much pain and had significant head pain and confusion — Smith suffered from head, shoulder, back, and knee pain, as well as chronic "dizzies"; that she was not expecting to die and didn't want to leave — the last words Smith told her bridge players the day she died was that she was looking forward to her 90th birthday party; she reported the names Betty and Margaret, Smith's mother and dear family friend).

However, once again, Medium 1 did not get the sitter's name, even when she was probed. And like Medium's 2 and 3, Medium 1 received no information about a secret phrase or code that was to be communicated. If telepathy with the living had been involved, Medium 1 should have gotten Smith's name and that some sort of secret message was potentially expected (the sitter was consciously thinking this during all of the readings). Also, if telepathy had been involved, Medium 1 should have been able to guess that the blind reading she performed two weeks earlier had been with Schwartz. (He was consciously thinking about the prior reading.) Medium 1 appeared completely surprised and visibly shaken when we ultimately informed her that Smith had died, and that Schwartz had been the sitter with Russek read (the sitter-silent paradigm) over the telephone two weeks earlier.

It is possible to argue, in theory, that super-psi might have been operative in these experiments. Super-psi includes the speculation that information exists on some dimension in Earth in documents or in living individuals' memories (other than the immediate sitter) and that sensitive mediums can somehow pick up this information. However, all three mediums reported experiencing the deceased "showing me" and "telling me" The experiences of the mediums are themselves not sufficient to establish the continuance of consciousness interpretation. However, their experiences and descriptions are consistent

with the latter interpretation, especially given the accuracy of the information retrieved. Statements such as, "I don't walk alone," that are especially fitting for the sitter, are among the strongest suggestive evidence for the continuance of consciousness after death.

We agree with Morse (2000) concerning Occam's Razor and the Law of Parsimony: "the truth of competing scientific hypotheses is always considered to be the one that can be explained in the most simple terms." (page 140). When all the data are considered, in total, the simplest and most parsimonious interpretation is the continuance of consciousness hypothesis.

We report these findings to honor Susy Smith's memory, and to encourage scientists and spiritual leaders to pass information about Smith, her website (www.afterlifecodes.com) and latest book (Smith, 2000), and her \$10,000 prize, to interested mediums and students. If Smith is correct, it will take interested people on the Earth who are (1) open to receiving her secret message, and then (2) willing to follow the directions on her website, to determine if the information deciphers the code.

Susy Smith devoted her entire adult life to addressing the grand question — does consciousness continue after physical death? Hopefully the publication of this article will help stimulate the process of determining if Smith's hope for the continued dedication and evolution of her consciousness is correct.

1 Susy Smith left an encrypted sentence on her website www.afterlifecodes.com that can be broken by a secret phrase she hoped (hopes?) to communicate after she died. The procedure for discovering whether a given phrase breaks the code requires connecting with the website. The history of the procedure is described in Smith's last published book, *The Afterlife Codes* (2000).

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—On Brotherhood

In order to realize that our humanness is shared, we must find a place of security and centeredness within ourselves. Then the natural by-product will be to acknowledge the universal quality inherent in men and women everywhere.

Furthermore, we better understand that "my brother is my savior," in the sense that he reflects back to us a part of ourselves which we need to see in order to become whole. So our reactions to people, places and things are paramount in the process of evolution. "Know thyself" becomes the initial stage of enlightenment, since without examination of the consciousness caused by our "programming," we can't get free.

In spite of appearances to the contrary, in essence all human beings share the same spark of the divine. The Christian Science phrase, "man is reflected Diety," explains the manifestation of form. At the core, we may be vibrating to different frequencies but we're on the same core. Rupert Sheldrake calls this phenomenon "morphic resonance," and from that perspective, we can discern that each of us is affecting the whole by our thoughts and behavior.

This presents the individual with a responsibility to act on behalf of the entire human family, since the total picture of our species' possibility for development will never reach the new highs until a "critical mass" begins to act "as if" they were gods who have the power to elicit change.

Insights pertaining to the brotherhood of man provide a platform on which rests the future of mankind. Those who see the potential inherent within men and women are the builders on whom we must depend. Moreover, only one by one are cornerstones laid to improve the quality of life for oncoming generations. Let us ask ourselves today, "Am I doing my part?" Then, remember that you are answering for everybody!

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