

Review of: "Signatures in mediumnic automatic writing - a pilot exploration of the resemblance with the deceased's handwriting"

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

Signatures in Mediumistic Automatic Writing – a review

Mediums often claim to have acquired skills and habits, as well as information, from deceased persons. Perhaps the most striking of these claims are of musical talents (see e.g. *Music and the Paranormal: an Encyclopaedic Dictionary*. Melvyn J Willin. MacFarland & co. 2022). The remarkable novels channelled by Chico Xavier combine skill and information. Incidentally Xavier's mediumship has been described in English language texts (e.g. by Guy Lyon Playfair in *The Flying Cow*).

A problem with all these 'skill' claims is that some manifest in evident pastiches while some demonstrate a level of skill comparable to that of their alleged source. It's generally difficult to distinguish pastiche from 'genuine'; showing that the medium had no prior skill or education relating to that demonstrated is usually the best that can be done.

This pilot study presents an original (so far as I know) and potentially 'objective' (i.e. accessible to scientific methodology) means of attributing authenticity to a channelled skill since signatures produced by mediums can be compared with a deceased's actual writings and could in principle be assessed by graphologists using 'double blind' methodology. It's a valuable and useful suggestion (which maybe needs to be spelled out a bit more in the text) that could support further interesting research, for instance into *how* a medium's motor systems can access the skill – what's happening at the neural level in authenticated cases?

As the author's say, they describe only a pilot 'proof of principle' study and maybe they should say a bit more about how it could be tightened up and developed. There are groups in Brazil, including at Sao Paulo University for instance, who could well be interested in collaboration, though research funds everywhere are a bit squeezed at present.

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