
The Paranormal and its Place in Human Relationships: Some Hypotheses¹

MICHAEL A. THALBOURNE

ABSTRACT: Part 1. There exists a minority of individuals who report that they have never, in their lifetimes, formed an extremely close personal and emotional relationship with another human being. Psychological research indicates that, compared with persons who report that they *have* at some time entered into such a relationship, these “non-close-relaters” tend to be more shy, more lacking in trust, more introverted and more lacking in social skills. In addition, non-close-relaters are less likely to believe in ESP or to report personal experience of paranormal phenomena; that is, they are more often than not intellectual and experiential “goats”. This paper explores a number of possible explanations—normal and paranormal—for this *attitudinal* difference: it is suggested that while ordinary psychological processes do play a rôle, the difference can best be understood if one additionally postulates the bidirectional operation of the paranormal: in particular, it is proposed that certain “extraverted” personality types will manifest hitting, in order to further the development of desired relationships; while certain “introverted” personality types will miss, with the effect of reducing intimacy in their dealings with other people. If it is assumed that instances of “negative ESP” in everyday life usually fail to be recognized as constituting ESP, then this would account for the non-close-relater’s failure to report paranormal experiences. Part 2 explores possible instances of significant missing in everyday life. (Cont’d)

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It is concluded that invocation of the paranormal hypothesis will enrich our understanding of the mechanisms of interpersonal interaction.

Part 1

Until relatively recently, physical chemists used to refer to a certain class of element as “inert gases”. These elements—argon, neon, xenon and the like—were termed “inert” because it was thought that, due to their atomic structure, they would not, under any circumstances, combine with other elements to form compounds. This article concerns, in part, human *beings* who might possibly represent the social-psychological analogues of inert gases, namely, individuals who have never in their lifetime formed a very close psychological bond with another person—individuals who have never had a close relationship on either a personal or emotional level.

Some readers might be reacting with skepticism at the suggestion that such people exist: surely *everyone* has a close relationship with *someone*, or at least has had one in the past, if only with a parent? It might be thought that one way of finding out whether there are such persons is simply to ask groups of people, via a brief, self-report questionnaire: “Has there ever been (either now or in the past) a person with whom you have had a very special relationship, such that you felt extremely close to them on a personal and emotional level, and it was reciprocated?” In March 1977, I gave a questionnaire of this kind to 235 First-Year Psychology students at the University of Adelaide, South Australia. Sixteen percent—or approximately one student in six—replied that they did not now have a close relationship and furthermore that they had never had one.

In October 1978, I again gave this questionnaire to 337 predominantly Psychology students at the University of Edinburgh, Scotland, and I found an identical figure of 16%. Twelve months later, in October 1979, I administered the questionnaire a third time, on this occasion to the 161 First-Year Psychology students at Edinburgh; a rather smaller figure was found, this time only 9%, but this is still not inconsiderable. And in any case the three surveys leave no doubt whatsoever that a certain minority of people *report* themselves as never having had a close, reciprocated relationship.

It should be pointed out that the respondents in these surveys were initially not given any explicit definition of what was meant by the phrase “an extremely close relationship”. Rather, the interpretation was left up to themselves. It could thus be argued that the negative responses to the questionnaire might have resulted simply from the application of an unusually stringent criterion of what is to count as “a close relationship”: perhaps a minority of people understood the phrase to refer to the experience of being in love, and decided that they had never been in that state.

In order to investigate this possibility, I included in the questionnaire a two-paragraph description of what constitutes a close relationship, purportedly written by a third party but in fact composed by myself:

“X and Y know each other pretty well—their attitudes and feelings about things and people, their likes and dislikes. Their relationship is such that they feel that they can talk to each other about almost anything; they share their secrets and their hopes, their successes and their failures; they nearly always feel free to open up to the other without fear of rejection; they can talk freely about their problems and feelings. They trust each other pretty well completely. They know that when they need help, the other person will not refuse to give it.

“X and Y generally get on well with each other: it goes without saying that they like each one another; they like being with each other and doing things together. When separated for any great length of time, they may miss each other, and long for the other’s companionship. Generally, they do not feel as close to anyone else as they do to one another. X and Y mean a great deal to each other. They sense a sort of bond of warmth and sympathy between them, and a feeling of belonging and being totally accepted. There probably exists between X and Y what you might call ‘love’: a wanting to give and a joy in receiving.”

Respondents were asked to read this definition and to state to what extent it agreed or disagreed with their *own* personal concept of closeness. In general, a large majority of respondents—upwards of 82%—stated that their own concept was very similar to, or exactly the same as, this definition. Furthermore, respondents who reply in the negative to the closeness questionnaire give *no* convincing evidence that their concept of closeness is any different to that of other people: they agree with the majority as to what a close personal relationship implies, but they deny ever having *experienced* such a relationship.

Now I hope I will be forgiven for introducing a little terminology to facilitate the discussion. Let us call a person who has *ever* had a close relationship, a “close-relater”, for short. And conversely, those persons who report that they’ve *never* had such a relationship, let us call “*non*-close-relaters”. I always apologise for this rather cumbersome mouthful of a term, but it is very difficult to think of a more appropriate one.

To proceed, then, we seem to have some reasonable evidence *that* non-close-relaters exist. The interesting question then becomes *why* they are this way: what is it about them that makes them different from people who have, at some stage in their life, formed a very close relationship? Is it due to lack of desire, or inability, or both? Part of my work as a psychologist has been to investigate this question, by making use of various standard personality questionnaires (Thalbourne, 1976): tests of extraversion, of warmth in dealing with other people, of social skills, social intelligence, independence, trust (as in McBeath & Thalbourne, 1993), and other dimensions. So far, I have found support for the hypothesis that, compared with

close-relaters, non-close-relaters tend to be more shy, more introverted, more mistrustful of other people, and more lacking in the skills necessary for successful social interaction. (Whether introversion leads to lack of social skills, or lack of social skills leads to introversion, is not clear.) The magnitude of these differences is not enormous: that is to say, personality-wise there is a good deal of overlap between the two groups of persons, such that there exist some close-relaters who are withdrawn, aloof, and socially inept, and there are non-close-relaters who are outgoing, extraverted, and highly accomplished in social *savoir-faire*; but the evidence suggests that these sorts of people are atypical, and are the exception rather than the rule.

Now it so happens that in addition to giving my subjects tests of personality and social intelligence I also gave them a sheep-goat scale—a questionnaire containing 10 items² relevant to their belief in, and experience of, various sorts of psychic phenomena (Thalbourne, 1981; Thalbourne & Haraldsson, 1980). This was not meant to be an exhaustive inquiry into every possible paranormal phenomenon, but merely an *ad hoc* selection of questions, asked initially for the sake of curiosity (Thalbourne & Delin, 1993). The items concerned the respondent's belief in ESP, in life-after-death, and in the possibility of contact with spirits of the dead; also, whether the subject believed they were psychic, had had a personal experience of ESP, a veridical hunch or premonition, a precognitive dream, a paranormal vision, or an experience of telepathy. These questions were presented in the form of statements, to be rated as being true, uncertain, or false of the respondent. In addition, the responses are given scores (2, 1 or 0, respectively) which can then be totalled to form a sheep-goat scale score ranging from 0 through 20. It gives an overall indication of the degree to which a person believes in, and has had (alleged) experience of, the paranormal.

This sheep-goat questionnaire was administered to two samples in Australia, two in Scotland, and one combined sample in the USA, and comparisons have been made between the responses given by close-and by non-close-relaters. It is these results that I would like to discuss in detail.

In the first study there was a total of 62 participants—36 close-relaters and 26 non-close-relaters. The responses to each of the ten attitude questions were compared, for the two groups, using a Chi-Square test with two degrees of freedom. On two of the ten items the differences between close- and non-close-relaters were significant,

² Or in the first study, 11 items: Item #10 was "I believe I have had at least one experience of telepathy between myself and the person who is my partner in this experiment", and Item #11 was "I believe I have had at least one experience of telepathy between myself and someone *other* than the person who is my partner in this experiment." Responses to these two items were combined in a logical, objective fashion to provide answers to the hypothetical statement "I believe I have had an experience of telepathy with someone."

viz., personal experience of ESP, and in particular, experience of telepathy. To illustrate this latter result a little more clearly, let us look at Table 1, which shows the breakdown for the “experience of telepathy” item.

Table 1.
Responses of close-relaters and non-close-relaters on the
“experience of telepathy” item

Response	CRs	NCRs
“True”	61%	19%
“Uncertain”	14%	4%
“False”	25%	77%

It can be seen that 61% of close-relaters report an experience of telepathy, compared to only 19% of non-close-relaters; only 25% of close-relaters fail to report such an experience, compared to a massive 77% of non-close-relaters. The odds against these differences being due to chance are approximately three thousand to one. The story is quite similar for the item regarding personal experience of ESP in general, with half the close-relaters reporting some such experience, but only about one non-close-relater in six doing same.

As regards the subsequent four studies, I shall not discuss the results in detail, but only say that in general very similar tendencies were observed, particularly in the second and third experiments; (the fourth experiment returned a rather meagre yield of significance, but it is my belief that this is almost certainly due to the small number of non-close-relaters in it, viz., 15: it has been my experience that you need at least 24 non-close-relaters in the sample before the Chi-square has a chance to reach statistical significance.) The most consistent differences were obtained on the items relating to personal experience of ESP, experience of telepathy, and also the question on having a veridical premonition.

If we look now not at the individual questions but at the total scale-scores, we find that the tendency so far observed becomes even more apparent. Let us examine Table 2.

Table 2.

Averages (*Ns* in parentheses) for the Ten-item Sheep-Goat Scale for close- and non-close-relaters.

Study	CRs	NCRs	t-ratio	p (2-t)
1st (Aus)	10.61 (36)	7.08 (26)	3.08	.003
2nd (Aus)	9.90 (187)	6.13 (38)	4.89	1.9×10^{-6}
3rd (UK)	9.15 (266)	7.23 (53)	3.32	.001
4th (UK)	8.81 (140)	7.13 (15)	1.54	.127
5th (US)	12.30 (149)	6.36 (11)	3.49	.001

In all five studies, the close-relaters averaged higher on the sheep-goat scale than did the non-close-relaters, and in four out of five of these studies the difference is highly significant statistically. So it can be concluded with a fair degree of confidence that close-relaters are significantly more “positive” towards psi phenomena than are non-close-relaters: that is, they have more of a tendency to believe in, and to report experience of, various things paranormal. Put yet another way, close-relaters tend to be sheep, and non-close-relaters are likely to be goats. My big question is “*Why?*”. Why do these two groups of people differ so markedly regarding their reports of psi?

But before attempting to answer this question, it should be pointed out that there is a group of persons whom I call “past close-relaters”: these are people who do not currently possess a close relationship, but who have had one in the past. By comparing the group to (current) close-relaters and to non-close-relaters, I hoped to find out whether it was the mere fact of *presently* having a close relationship that caused a person to be more positive towards the paranormal; or whether it was more to do with the ability in general to be the sort of person who *can* have a close relationship (whether or not they had one now.)

Comparisons between close-relaters and past close-relaters yielded *no* significant differences between the two groups: their responses were essentially the same. However, past close-relaters gave very different responses to those of non-close-relaters. So what these results indicate is that it is not the present lack of a close relationship that accounts for the differences, but rather something like the fact that one has either now, or at some earlier stage in one’s life, had experience of a close relationship; the ability to form a close relationship goes along with a positive attitude to the paranormal.

So by way of summary, the question “Do you currently have, or have you ever had, a close, reciprocated relationship on a personal and emotional level?” appears to be a powerful way of separating respondents into two groups which are different from each other belief-wise and experience-wise. There seem to be real differences between close-relaters and non-close-relaters, and my big question is, as before, what causes them?

SOME HYPOTHESES

At least five possible explanations suggest themselves—two psychological and three parapsychological.

First of all, it may be that being closely associated with another person gives rise to a greater possibility of experiencing coincidences of thought, and these coincidences are erroneously interpreted as paranormal communication. This sort of situation might occur most frequently in long-standing marriages. This would explain why close-relaters more frequently report experience of telepathy and of ESP.

The second psychological hypothesis is that perhaps non-close-relaters have a more negative attitude towards interpersonal communication and the possibilities thereof. This might help explain, for example, an otherwise curious finding from the second study that close-relaters tend to believe in contact with spirits of the dead. Interestingly, and something which can be interpreted as consistent with this idea, is the fact that ghosts and spirits in most societies throughout history tend to be relatives or close friends (Rosenblatt, Walsh & Jackson, 1976) and bereavement apparitions and death-bed visions (see Houran & Lange, 1997) are a good contemporary example of this.

If we are prepared to postulate the existence of the paranormal, then a third possible explanation is the closeness hypothesis, that is, the notion that a close relationship does in fact facilitate the occurrence of telepathic experiences with one's partner. But then it becomes hard to explain why close-relaters report more telepathy with people *outside* that close relationship (a finding from Study 1).

This leads me to my fourth possible explanation, which is as follows: rather than a close relationship creating the favorable conditions for telepathy to occur, it may be that *some people have a natural telepathic rapport with other persons which enables a close relationship to develop*. Perhaps non-close-relaters do not succeed in forming a close relationship partly because they lack, among other things, telepathic ability. This hypothesis would then explain the non-close-relaters' consistent failure to report experiences of telepathy or psi in general.

But I mentioned that I thought there were at least *five* possible explanations. I have discussed four, so what then is the fifth? The hypothesis, in short, is this: perhaps it is not the case that non-close-relaters are lacking in paranormal ability; perhaps, rather, it is simply the case that they use their ability in such a way as to *miss*, whereas close-relaters in general use it to *hit*. (There exists good experimental

evidence that such “negative” ESP exists.) A sub-hypothesis is that paranormally-based missing in everyday life is (generally) not recognized as such, and is therefore not taken to be an experience of ESP. Unpublished experimental data from four free-response studies do indeed suggest that non-close-relaters, rather than scoring at chance, significantly miss, or at least score negatively.

The great difficulty with this fifth hypothesis is that it is very hard to think of concrete instances of “significant” missing in spontaneous situations. It is comparatively easy to think of ways in which *hitting* would facilitate social interaction. For example, I know of two people who attributed the successful formation of their relationship to the woman’s ability to understand, tacitly, ideas and feelings in her boyfriend which he was unable to articulate clearly. In the case of hitters, the paranormally acquired information successfully enters consciousness or is reflected in the behavioural responses. And given that the psychological makeup of the two people is such that they desire to be close to one another, the paranormal acquisition of information will facilitate a harmonious “meshing” of thought and interaction. But what would be an example of missing in an interpersonal situation in everyday life? For the longest time I was inclined to agree with Louisa Rhine when she says that “it is obvious that if [paranormal missing] occurred in life situations, no recognizable experience would result” (Rhine, 1965, p. 265). However, through the good offices of the Society for Psychical Research and a happy coincidence, I came across a man, living in Wales, who might be called a walking paranormal misser. In Part 2 I give verbatim his letter to the Society (I have his permission to quote his name and his experiences) as well as extracts from subsequent letters to me.

Part 2

1af Tachwedd, 1980

Dear Sir,

It is just possible that some of my frequent experiences touch matters with which you deal. They are of a character which forced me in 1971 to enter the Psychiatric Unit, East Glamorgan hospital, as an in patient and then a day patient until 1976. In 1979 I had to return as an in patient in April and became a day patient until early this year. I refer only to an area of what might be called the unusual in my life (I am now 71), and not to the mental trouble which may have been caused by these matters which I must try and tell you about.

My first experience happened when as a boy of about six I dropped a new large red pencil upon the floor while I was playing noughts and crosses with my father. We at once searched for it—we, including my mother and sister. We never found it. From that day much of my life was impaired by losing things, some of them fairly large. They were not merely mislaid. At the age

of ten when at a boarding school I received a ten shilling postal order from home to defray odd expenses on the way home at the end of term. I clutched the order tightly on receiving it and I remember saying to myself that I was likely to lose it. During one morning I lost and found it several times and finally lost it. I discovered in my adolescence that I could not be trusted with money; that is, I would probably lose it or some of it. On three occasions only belief in my honesty saved me from a magistrates' court. Recently I was using a 1953 Catholic directory and suddenly lost it. I have never found it again, though my wife and I have thoroughly searched for what is not a small volume.

For some reason akin to this problem is a Harry Worth literalism (as I suspect). When I first went to the psychiatric unit I saw a sign by the main hospital road which read "pedestrians keep right". I obeyed and ended at the general out-patients dept. When I did see the top man, I told him why I was late. He was amazed. No patient on the first arrival had ever made that "mistake". He was eager to know of similar events. I remembered several.

1. When I went at the age of nine to East Dereham in Norfolk my father told me that on my return I should get out of the carriage and stand under the big clock until he arrived. I obeyed. I stood under it till the station police took me in. Two hours later an irate father arrived but just could not understand how the police did indeed find me where I had been standing—under the big clock. Alas, five platforms away there was another similar clock.

2. When I was doing my army training before I went into the Engineers in 1942, the corporal found that—to him—I had not put up my gas cape properly so that it fell down on pulling the cord. He took me aside and when he was satisfied that I had put it up properly he told me that all was well and that I should pull the cord. I did. Nothing happened. The sergeant and then a lieutenant were called. I went through the drill again and again but never would the cape fall down. The officer was wonderstruck.

3. When playing for the school in London I was told verbally (N.B.) to get to Lea (Lee) station to meet the rest. I obeyed. I went to the Lee station in North London, not to the Lea station in S.E. London. The station's name was not written out, or no doubt I would not have blundered, if you call it blundered.

4. On many occasions I have blundered when, having asked for directions, I obey to the letter and yet find that I have taken the second or third on the right or left, when I have been told to take the first or second. What has apparently happened is my taking a lane as one of the turnings.

5. Many times as a boy I would carefully obey my mother's instruction to look at, say, the right hand drawer of a dressing table and bring down something. I do not find it. I call and my mother appears. "Not that dressing table." I give this as one of similar examples.

6. Although I played [cricket] well—fairly useful as a middle bat and a spin bowler and pretty good at cover point, and was occasionally picked as back—there arose a myth of me as a Jonah. It was even remarked that even when I did especially well, the team lost. Indeed, I was picked now and again simply to give me something like justice. The "Jonah" nickname stuck to me later. When I lived in the Swansea valley a local farmer discovered that his car broke down every time he gave me a lift. So no more lifts. I knew this cussedness as a small boy. As a supporter of Cambridge at the boat race I yelled for Oxford. It always worked. If I yelled for Cambridge as I did at first, Oxford won. I have long since done the same, e.g., getting into the other crowd at Arms Park and yelling against the Welsh fifteen. (You might say that of course Wales has a habit of winning.) If I want to catch a bus I have for years walked past a stop looking back surreptitiously. If I wait at the stop the bus is a long time coming. If I try this trick, the bus soon comes.

7. I used to play the violin well enough to get into several orchestras. But I always played better at rehearsals. I could never play the violin solo in front of anyone, not well, I mean.

8. I believe there is something odd about my right hand. Physically, there is a slight deformity which consists of a double joint between the thumb and the first finger, which may have helped in spin bowling. I have always been the person to cause the electric light to fuse, and in some quarters people say I can accidentally break the unbreakable. My Uncle John Edwards sent me when 17 to the Institute of Industrial Psychology where I did well save for manual tasks of which one demanded I put a key in a key hole. I jammed the lock and the two experts were quite puzzled. In any case whatever I had done meant that they would have to buy a new lock and key. I have repeated this sort of accident from time to time.

9. By some freak of fortune I never suffered from this during the second world war though I was an air raid warden in Croydon and went into a bomb disposal unit. Back in civvy street the accidents resumed (I have mentioned, though, the odd case of the gas cape). That they remained few is due to my wariness. I never take risks of any consequence. I never bet or gamble or play games of any sort. My father once said to me: "Do not try to emulate Sir William Harcourt". That great man was so good at making his brief that

people commonly went against him. Let's say that I make a speech in defence of Toryism, which I learned from the lips of my classics as well as my history tutor (I wrote a book on Disraeli which Cape published). Be sure that my listeners will not simply be unimpressed: they will feel that I must be utterly wrong. When I left the Conservative Party, it came back to power. For over ten years I had a bi-weekly column in the Welsh edition of the Liverpool post in which I often advocated the cause of Welsh Nationalism (espoused by some other Welsh Tories like the Celticist Wade-Evans). The people in Plaid Cymru greatly disliked my support for their cause and often wrote to say so. The editor sacked me. In much the same way I found that my advocacy of the Tridentine (Gregorian) rite as representative of the Latin Mass Society did the cause much harm because it embittered the hierarchy. I was told I had handscored too many bull's eyes. I went on Welsh radio on the subject and was told afterwards that I had completely taken the wind out of the archbishop's sails. I resigned as rep. Things have vastly improved since an Englishman living in Wales has taken up the job. "Nothing fails like success", as G.K.C. pointed out.

10. At the unit I was given an I.Q. test. It came out as 153, which is supposed to be good. On the other hand none of my good writing has ever been published and I have managed too well with inferior stuff. I am sure that this is related to what I think is true, namely, that if I am careless about something, all will go well. For example, if I put something carefully away, it is more likely to get lost than if I do not care where I put it. I have therefore made a slight study to be carefully careless, which seems an antinomy. One example is much in my mind now. If I want to catch a train, I find it safer to give myself little time. Time and again I have found that, if I start early, something will hinder my travel. At one time it was bad if I happened to meet a native of Cardigan at Cardiff station because it would always mean that the train on which we travelled would unusually come to a long stop outside Pontypridd station. We used to call each other Jonah. Three times my meeting him thus caused him to arrive very late at a dinner.

Now I come to think of it, in 1973 I arranged to be one of a party going to Rome. All was properly arranged down to the labels on my luggage. My clever brother who was taking me to Gatwick (the hospital had given special permission) laughed when I told him that much would go wrong, e.g., I would not find the others of the party. At Gatwick I tried hard and then collapsed. When I had recovered I was taken to the right 'plane. But no-one on that 'plane admitted to belonging to the party. At Rome airport I had to hire a taxi to get me to the hotel where the courier was waiting anxiously for me. There were all the others, who denied that the air hostess had asked them if they were of the party. Three days later my passport disappeared. I was taken to

the local loony bin. The passport was later found pushed far underneath a large screwed down armchair. Returning, two Canadians decided to keep company with me and to get on the train with me to Victoria. I told them that my luggage would get lost on the moving wharf. They saw it put on. A few minutes later their luggage arrived but, as I foresaw, my luggage was missing. They stared hard at each other. The younger Canadian determined to investigate while the older one attended to me. Over an hour elapsed and then all by itself came my luggage. There was no explanation.

I am giving you examples which just come to mind. Some do not fit into obvious categories, but the two psychiatrists have long been bemused by what they have discerned. It may have to do with “accident proneness” which, I believe, is now admitted to have foundation.

I am sorry to have been prolix, but I have written at random.

Yours sincerely,

H.W.J. Edwards

Some other incidents about which Mr. Edwards wrote me are worth note:

1. Just before the war I was asked when in South London to go to a chapel in Grafton Square, Clapham, and I accordingly went to meet some people there. The square is or was not only large but one side was then hidden from the other. I went to the Baptist chapel. I should have gone to the Congregational chapel on the other side. I was not told what denomination the chapel was. I retain the odd feeling that had I gone to the Congregational chapel, I ought instead have gone to the Baptist! About twenty years ago I was supposed to meet a relative by Smith's bookshop at Cardiff General Station. There were two bookshops rather distant from each other. I was at the wrong one. There is only one now but there is another on platform 1.

2. In January [1981] I received a rather large cheque. I had to post it to my bank in Cardiff. But, as I told the postmistress, I had a strong hunch that, were I to send it in the ordinary way, something would go wrong. I therefore sent it by recorded delivery.

After a week had passed I rang the bank manager who told me that he had not received the cheque. But he would have an instant search made and would ring in a few minutes. He rang. No sign of the cheque. I therefore gave the number of the Recorded Delivery slip. He told me he'd ring in about an hour. About an hour after he did ring. The cheque had been found “in a place where it should not have been”. He was very sorry. But I told him I had a vital witness to my hunch it would be lost or mislaid.

3. I have for long taken it for granted that someone I want to see but who has no appointment will call when I am out for a few minutes. On the other hand time and time again I'll stay in to keep an appointment. An hour or more later—usually much later—I'll go out. The caller calls almost as soon as I am out.³

Examples could be multiplied, but I think I have given sufficient to support the hypothesis that paranormal missing does seem to occur in everyday life, as, for example, incidents or runs of bad luck in choice or deed. It is unclear at this stage just what sort of personality type is most prone to these incidents—Mr. Edwards was admitted to hospital as an “obsessive” and as far as I know he was not particularly self-sabotaging. But there seems no reason not to suppose that other people have instances similar to these, though perhaps not quite so striking or pernicious, and that this may occur interpersonally as well in such a way as to bring it about that the shy, skill-lacking non-close-relater remains just that: an unintentionally (but deep-down, thankfully) missed rendezvous? Choosing to go out of the house just when a (potentially intimate) ‘phone call comes through? Faux pas where the regrettable information just “pops into one’s head”? Clumsiness of a particularly devastating nature? A lost treasure or trinket? Mr. Edwards has perhaps shown us ways in which the paranormal can cause us to miss in everyday life and, in particular, to cause havoc in our relationships with other people.

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³ I have this phenomenon occur myself when waiting all day for a telephone call which never comes when I am home, but, as soon as I step out, comes through and is recorded on my answer machine. I have hitherto called this “Thalbourne’s Law”.

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Department of Psychology
Adelaide University
Adelaide
South Australia 5005
Email: psym-tha@psychology.adelaide.edu.au