Journal of Parapsychology, 79(2), 203–218

THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE FEELING OF BEING WATCHED TO PARANOIA, SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS, AND SOCIAL ANXIETY

By Ian S. Baker

ABSTRACT: The common experience of the feeling of being watched by another has been experimentally examined for over 100 years. However, little research has been conducted to investigate the belief in this phenomenon in detail or potential relationships to related personality measures. In two studies, sampling over 2,500 people and using a new measure, belief in *remote staring detection* was shown to decrease as barriers between the starer and staree increased. In addition, an exploratory factor analysis demonstrated that belief in remote staring detection is complex and is related to a sense of presence (collectively referred to here as *paranormal perceptual awareness* or PPA). It is also different from both extramission (i.e., something is emitted from the eye when one looks at something) and the belief in an "evil-eye" (i.e., one person can cause harm to another person just by looking at them). Both extramission and evil-eye beliefs are collectively defined here as *eye-energy belief* or EEB. Multivariate multiple regression analysis revealed that personality measures of self-consciousness, paranoia, and social anxiety significantly predicted both PPA and EEB. However, PPA belief implies more generalised awareness of one's social interactions, albeit interpreted through paranormal mechanisms, whereas EEB belief suggests greater concern regarding how another's gaze can impact oneself, particularly with negative connotations.

Keywords: remote staring detection, belief, paranoia, self-consciousness, supernatural monitoring hypothesis

Remote staring detection refers to the feeling of being watched by another, even though there should be no way of knowing by conventional means that one is being watched (Baker, 2005; Braud, Shafer, & Andrews, 1993a). This phenomenon has been investigated experimentally for over 100 years (Titchener, 1898) but there has been little research examining the belief in remote staring detection in detail, even though the prevalence of the belief in it is high. Research that has examined the rates of belief in remote staring detection report that between 74% and 87% of the population exhibit such a belief (Rosenthal, Tabony, Soper, & Rosenthal, 1997; Sheldrake, 2003). Similarly, research examining self-reported experiences of remote staring detection has suggested that between 68% and 94% of the population report having had some experience of this phenomenon (Braud et al., 1993a; Schlitz & LaBerge, 1997; Sheldrake, 1994). Although research indicates the high prevalence of the belief in and experience of remote staring detection, most studies merely asked if a respondent believes in or has experienced the phenomenon on a yes/no scale, with no gradation of response. Furthermore, with the exception of one study (Thalbourne & Evans, 1992), there have been no distinctions drawn between the experience of the role of the starer (i.e., staring at someone remotely and watching the person turn around) and the role of the staree (i.e., feeling the remote stare of another and turning around) in order to see if one role is experienced more frequently than the other. Finally, many of the studies referenced above failed to report adequate detail for replication, and there was also a general lack of distinction between the belief in and the experience of the phenomenon.

Several researchers have associated belief in remote staring detection with belief in the evil-eye (Cottrell, Winer, & Smith, 1996; Sheldrake, 1994, 2000; Staats, Ross, Irmscher, & Rada, 2002; Thalbourne & Evans, 1992), due to both beliefs relating to an eye-based paranormal influence, but no direct comparisons have been made between these beliefs. For Cottrell et al. (1996) and Sheldrake (2005b), the link between the two beliefs is extramission: the idea that when an individual looks at something, some-

thing is emitted from the eyes. They theorise that this underlying belief results in a person believing they can feel the stares of others. Cottrell et al. (1996) tested this hypothesis in three studies, one of which tested the hypothesis that increasing levels of occlusion (barriers between the starer and staree) would reduce the frequency of the experience of remote staring detection due to the belief that the emitted signal would become attenuated.

Testing nearly 200 participants revealed significant differences in the feeling of being stared at in the following increasing order: one-way mirror, dropped screen, peep-hole, transparent curtain, and window. The researchers concluded that these findings do not support the occlusion hypothesis as ". . . a peephole does not interfere with the passage of light or any emanations from the starer's eyes" (p. 54). However, they go on to speculate that a more extensive barrier between the individuals typically results in starees being less likely to believe that they will be able to feel the starer's looks. Therefore, the extent of the barrier is still a factor, but individuals do not necessarily believe they are detecting some form of emission.

However, barriers between starer and staree appear to influence belief and thus barriers require further examination. A better way of testing this is through the development of experimental methods for examining remote staring detection over the years. In many of the earliest experiments, the starer and staree were in the same room (e.g., Coover, 1913; Poortman, 1959; Sheldrake, 2005a; Tichener, 1898). Later, studies separated starer and staree by a window (e.g., Sheldrake, 2002), a one-way mirror (e.g., Peterson, 1978), or a closed-circuit television (CCTV) system (e.g., Braud et al., 1993a; Braud, Shafer, & Andrews, 1993b). Typically, these methods have increased controls over extraneous variables by introducing increasing barriers between the starer and staree, but at the potential cost of ecological validity (Baker, 2005). However, there has not been an examination of how people's beliefs in remote staring detection might be affected by increasing such barriers between starer and staree, as used in the experiments above. More specifically, beliefs in remote staring detection with regard to such barriers may also impact the potential success of remote staring experiments that utilise such methods.

In addition, although the use of CCTV systems, where the starer views the staree via a computer-controlled video camera, is considered the gold standard of controlling for extraneous variables in remote staring experiments (Schmidt, Schneider, Utts, & Walach, 2004), there is currently no research examining the prevalence of belief in the existence of remote staring detection via the medium of CCTV systems. As a conservative estimate, the United Kingdom, for example, has over four million CCTV cameras: one camera for every 14 people (Barrett, 2013; Norris, McCahill, & Wood, 2004). If only a small proportion of the population believes that it is possible to detect a remote stare via a CCTV camera, the impact of this belief when combined with living in a highly observed society may be considerable.

In this paper I present two studies; the second study builds upon the findings of the first study and addresses the first study's limitations.

Study 1

The first study was an exploratory study designed to distinguish between aspects of remote staring experiences and beliefs, such as differences in acting as a starer and a staree, and to determine if participants believed that it was possible to detect a remote stare under various conditions. In the first study, I explored the differences in how common it is to experience being a starer compared to being a staree. This builds upon Thalbourne and Evans' (1992) research that suggested that acting as a staree may be more common (85%) than acting as a starer (66%). I also examined the influence of barriers that occlude the stare between the starer and staree on belief, using a procedure similar to that of Cottrell et al. (1996). These barriers corresponded to those that have been employed in experiments to test for the existence of remote staring detection with increasing levels of occlusion, namely, same room (i.e., no real barrier), window, one-way mirror, and CCTV. Finally, I tested the potential differences between belief in remote staring detection and belief in the evil-eye in order to assess if these beliefs are the same.

The hypotheses tested in the first study were:

1. There will be a significant difference in how common it is to experience being a starer compared to being a staree.
2. There will be a significant linear decrease in the levels of belief in remote staring as the level of occlusion (or barriers) between the starer and staree increases.
3. There will be a significant difference between belief in remote staring detection and belief in the evil-eye.

Method

Participants. Using a cross-sectional design, 1,405 participants completed an online questionnaire (outlined below) hosted on the SurveyMonkey website using an opportunistic and self-selecting sampling method. Participants were unpaid. A small proportion of participants (14.5%) were excluded from the analysis due to missing values from the primary measures. This resulted in data from 1,200 participants being used in the analysis. The sample consisted of 441 males, 725 females, and 34 unspecified, between 18 and 98 years old (M = 34.3, SD = 12.73), from 60 different self-specified nationalities (29.8% British, 19.7% American, each of the other nationalities < 5%). Ethical clearance was obtained from the Psychology Ethics Committee at the University of Edinburgh.

Measures and procedure. The participants responded to the first seven items of the remote staring detection questionnaire (RSDQ; see appendix, the additional items were added in the second study), in addition to general demographic questions. The two items relating to the experience of remote staring detection were measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (never) to 5 (all the time): "How often have you felt the sensation that someone was staring at the back of your head and when you have turned around you have found someone staring at you?" and "How often have you stared at the back of someone's head and they have turned around and looked at you?"

The five items relating to belief in remote staring detection were measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (no, not at all) to 5 (yes, definitely) and related to the different methodologies employed in remote staring studies. These were: "I believe that you can detect another person's gaze from across a room, even if you cannot see them"; "I believe that you can detect another person's gaze when they are looking at you through a window, even if you cannot see them"; "I believe that you can detect another person's gaze through a one-way mirror (i.e., they can see you, but you cannot see them)"; and "I believe that you can detect another person's gaze when they are staring at you via a closed-circuit television camera (CCTV)." A final question examined the evil-eye belief: "I believe in the idea of an 'evil-eye' (i.e., one person can cause harm to another person just by looking at them)."

Results

Analysis was conducted using R (2.15.1) and SPSS 19 software. Summary statistics are presented in Figure 1. Cronbach's α for the RSDQ scale in this study was .87.

Participants more frequently reported having experienced the phenomenon of being stared at by someone else (M = 3.08, SD = 0.98), compared to having acting as starers themselves (M = 3.02, SD = 0.95), although this difference only approached significance, $t(1199) = 1.94$, $p = .052$, $r = .03$.

A one-way repeated measures ANOVA with Greenhouse-Geisser correction ($\varepsilon = .87$) revealed a significant difference in belief between the four levels of remote staring occlusion, $F(2.60, 311.86) = 667.23$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .12$. Furthermore, this difference was significantly linear in nature with a medium overall effect size, $F(1, 1199) = 1260.59$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .12$; this can be seen in the descriptive statistics in Figure 1. Post-hoc analyses indicated that the level of self-reported belief in these different types of remote staring detection significantly decreased in a linear fashion as the degree of occlusion between the starer and staree increased (see Table 1).

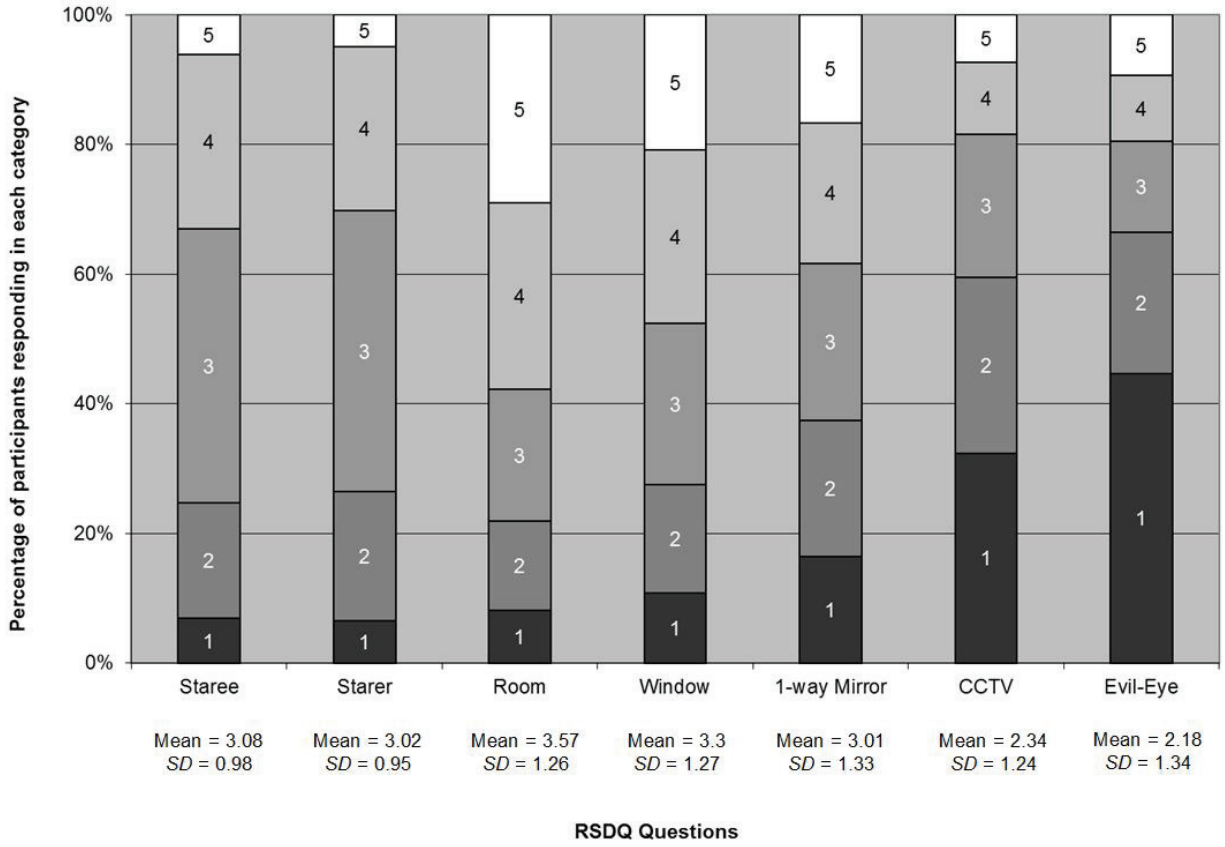

Figure 1. Descriptive statistics for all RSDQ scale questions from study 1.

Table 1
Post-Hoc Paired-Sampled t-test Statistics and Effect Sizes (r) for Belief in the Four Different Levels of Occlusion

	Room	Window	One-Way Mirror
Window	11.48 (.11)		
One-Way Mirror	19.00 (.21)	11.75 (.11)	
CCTV	35.69 (.44)	31.30 (.36)	22.80 (.25)

Note. For all comparisons $df = 1199$ and $p < .001$

Finally, participants were significantly more likely to believe in remote staring detection compared to belief in the evil-eye, $t(1199) = 32.78$, $p < .001$, $r = .47$, although a post-hoc analysis revealed there is a moderate correlation between the two variables, $r(1200) = .37$, $p < .001$.

Discussion

Study 1 did not find a significant difference in the experience of acting as a starer compared to acting as a staree. Although the difference was arguably approaching significance, the large sample and small effect size underscore the fact that it is unlikely to be psychologically meaningful. This result illustrates that the active and passive aspects of remote staring detection are experienced with similar frequency.

There was also a significant decrease in belief in remote staring detection as the levels of occlusion between the starer and staree were increased, which is broadly consistent with Cottrell et al's (1996) findings. There was a significant linear relationship with the level of belief decreasing across the four levels in the following order: room, window, one-way mirror, and CCTV, suggesting that the underlying belief is complex. One interpretation is that belief in extramission is a factor, as the increasing barriers would attenuate any signal or energy coming from the eye. However, it also indicates that extramission belief may represent an incomplete explanation, as CCTV would not transmit such a signal. This is similar to the conclusions drawn in Cottrell et al.'s (1996) research, except that they found that "peep hole" was rated as lower than "window" in terms of potentially feeling stares, even though a peep hole would not attenuate an extramission signal and should therefore be rated higher if extramission was the explanation. In addition, this finding suggests that participants may be less likely to believe in the potential success of an experiment that uses a CCTV separation method to examine remote staring detection, which has become a common methodology (e.g., Baker & Stevens, 2013; Braud et al., 1993a, 1993b; Schmidt et al., 2004). Although this is a useful way of controlling for extraneous variables, it is recommended that this method be explained at the point of recruitment in future experimental studies so that potential participants understand the nature of the experiment from the outset and hopefully adjust their expectations. An interesting finding was that approximately 20% of the sample responded "4" or "5" on the RSDQ, indicating that they believed in the possibility of remote staring detection via the medium of CCTV. Due to the prevalence of CCTV systems in many developed countries, this belief may impact a substantial part of the population, particularly if it interacts with personality characteristics such as paranoia, self-consciousness, and social anxiety.

The findings also demonstrated a significant difference between belief in remote staring detection and belief in the evil-eye, with significantly higher levels of belief in remote staring detection. The large effect size of indicates there is a robust difference between these two measures, which may indicate that belief in the evil-eye and belief in remote staring detection represent different belief constructs, a suggestion that is different from previous research (Cottrell et al., 1996; Sheldrake, 1994, 2000; Staats et al., 2002, Thalbourne & Evans, 1992). However, a post-hoc analysis showed there was also a significant correlation between these two measures, suggesting some degree of relationship between them requiring further investigation.

Study 1 did have some limitations: (a) the questions were limited in scope, (b) the measurement of extramission belief was indirect; participants were not directly asked if they believed in the concept of extramission, and (c) experience and belief in remote staring detection needed to be measured in relation to relevant psychological variables more broadly. These limitations are addressed in the second study.

Study 2

Study 1 demonstrated significantly different levels of belief in remote staring detection and the evil-eye, but there was also a significant correlation between these beliefs. Evil-eye belief can be complex and often centers on negative influences associated with one person staring at another person in general, and it is particularly associated with the expression of envy (Dundes, 1992; Reminick, 1985). A limitation of the first study was that it did not explore these elements in more detail, and an examination of envious looks in addition to evil-eye belief would add to our understanding of the relationship between belief in remote staring detection and evil-eye belief. Similarly, the linear decrease in remote staring belief as barriers increased found in Study 1 suggested that extramission belief may not be a viable explanation for remote staring belief. However, extramission belief was not explicitly measured in the first study and additional research examining this is required. Finally, a paranormal phenomenon not yet discussed that has been related to remote staring detection is belief in the *sense of presence*. This refers to the sensation that another person is present, but it cannot be detected by the recognized senses (Green & McCreery, 1975). It is most commonly associated with a small percentage of apparition-like experiences (Green & McCreery, 1975), but its weakest form has been associated with the feeling of being watched (Bennett & Bennett, 2000). However, belief in this phenomenon has not been directly assessed alongside belief in remote staring detection and was not measured in Study 1.

A second study was designed to address the limitations of Study 1 and to build upon its findings. This study took the original questions used in the first study and added questions to address the issues outlined above; for example, envious looks were assessed, and beliefs in extramission, intromission (i.e., when someone or something is looked at, light enters the eye), and a sense of presence were measured. The intention was that the addition of these questions would produce a belief in Remote Staring Detection Scale, which could measure this belief and related phenomena such as the evil-eye, extramission, and sense of presence.

As part of the development of the scale, it was anticipated that an exploratory factor analysis would reveal if it was unitary measure or consisted of subscales, given that the differences found in the first study between belief in remote staring detection and the evil-eye suggest that questions about these beliefs may separate into subscales. Such a scale would aid the understanding of this particular form of paranormal belief and the recruitment of participants demonstrating high levels of belief for experiments involving remote staring detection. It would further allow examination of whether belief in remote staring detection is a different construct from belief in the evil-eye.

In addition, the first study did not relate the findings of belief in remote staring and the evil-eye with relevant personality correlates, which could help explain the origins of such beliefs. Research has previously examined a variety of potential personality correlates with remote staring detection such as paranormal belief (Watt, Schlitz, Wiseman, & Radin, 2005; Williams, 1983; Wiseman & Schlitz, 1997, 1999); social avoidance and distress (Braud, et al., 1993b; Schlitz & LaBerge, 1997); the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (Braud et al., 1993b); shyness and perceived luckiness (Wiseman & Smith, 1994); and extraversion (Lobach & Bierman, 2004). However, this research examined personality correlates in the context of experimental testing of the phenomena as opposed to exploring the relationship between personality correlates and beliefs and experiences of this phenomenon.

Only one previous study has attempted to examine personality characteristics and their relationship with this belief (Staats et al., 2002). It revealed a predictive relationship between public self-consciousness and remote staring detection belief, but only when social situation variables, such as whether you are being stared at whilst being on your own or amongst friends, were added to the model. However, the relatively low number of participants ($N = 71$) with a relatively high number of predictors (eight) in the study may have contributed to the ambiguity of the results due to it being underpowered. Therefore, there may be a stronger relationship between remote staring belief and self-consciousness than Staats et al. reported.

Staats et al. (2012) used the Self Consciousness Scale (SCS; Fenigstein, Scheier, & Buss, 1975) to assess the different facets of self-consciousness. This scale has been divided into three subscales (Burnkrant & Page, 1984; Mittal & Balasubramanian, 1987). The Private Self-Consciousness subscale is an index of one's awareness of the inner or personal aspects of one's self. The Public Self-Consciousness subscale is a measure of one's self as a social object. The third subscale, Social Anxiety, is a general measure of social anxiety. It is interesting that Staats et al. used only the Public and Private Self-Consciousness subscales of the SCS. However, their findings indicate that social factors are important when assessing belief in remote staring; indeed, the Social Anxiety subscale contains the question "It's hard for me to work when someone is watching me." Therefore, the Social Anxiety subscale was included in this study. As the Public Self-Consciousness and Social Anxiety subscales both measure broadly an individual's awareness of self within a social environment, it was hypothesized that their scores will positively predict scores on the Remote Staring Detection Belief Scale. In contrast, private self-consciousness is awareness of one's internal self, and therefore higher scores on such an inwardly looking measure would negatively predict beliefs that rely upon an outward awareness of others looking at oneself.

Nonclinical paranoia is related to self-consciousness and was noted as correlating most strongly with the public self-consciousness subscale ($r = .40$) of the SCS during the development of a measure of nonclinical paranoia (Fenigstein & Vanable, 1992). Using items derived from several paranoia scales, Fenigstein and Vanable (1992) constructed a scale measuring nonclinical paranoia, named the Paranoia Scale. This scale contains questions that are relevant to belief in remote staring detection, for example, "I have often felt that strangers were looking at me critically", "Someone has been trying to influence my

mind" and "I am bothered by people outside, in cars, in stores, etc. watching me" (p. 132). When testing their scale, Fenigstein and Vanable (1992) used a behavioural measure where participants were asked to wait for 5 min in a room with a large one-way mirror in it before going on to complete an anagram experiment. They found that, compared to participants who waited in a room without the mirror, participants who waited in the room with the one-way mirror demonstrated a significant relationship between one item on a questionnaire that focused on the feeling of being watched and both the Paranoia Scale and the Public Self-Consciousness subscale of the SCS, which had been completed several weeks before. They also replicated this finding in a similar, second experiment. They concluded that "The feeling of being watched or that others are taking special notice of one is a classic manifestation of a paranoid idea of reference . . . it may be argued that this feeling of being observed derives from one's own self-directed attention" (Fenigstein & Vanable, 1992, p. 133). Therefore, nonclinical paranoia has been demonstrated as correlating with aspects of self-consciousness, and remote staring belief was an important consideration in the development of its measure. It was hypothesized that nonclinical paranoia scores would also positively predict scores on the Remote Staring Detection Scale.

In summary, the second study used the first study as a basis for exploring the nature of belief in, and experience of, remote staring detection by adding additional questions to the original measure in order to address some of the limitations of the first study. In addition, an exploratory factor analysis was planned in order to determine the structure of the belief in more detail. This culminated in a regression analysis to test the hypothesis that scores on the subscales of the self-consciousness scale and the nonclinical paranoia scale would significantly predict scores on the remote staring detection belief scale.

Method

Participants. Using a cross-sectional design, an opportunistic and self-selected sampling method was used to select 1,447 participants who completed the online questionnaire hosted on the SurveyMonkey website. The participants were unpaid. Almost a quarter of the participants (22.9%) were excluded from the analysis due to missing values on the primary measures, resulting in 1,116 participants in the analysed sample. This sample consisted of 404 males, 697 females, and 15 unspecified, all between 18 and 80 years old ($M = 35.3$, $SD = 11.81$) and from 67 different self-specified nationalities (34.3% British, 24.2% American, each of the other nationalities < 5%). Ethical clearance was obtained from the Psychology Ethics Committee at the University of Edinburgh.

Measures and procedure. The participants completed the measures in the following order: questions on general demographic information, and the 22-item Revised SCS (rSCS), followed by the 20-item Paranoia Scale (PS). They were then asked to complete 11 items regarding experiences of, and belief in, remote staring detection and related phenomena (RSDQ). It has been argued in previous research that questionnaire measures should be administered before psi tasks in case the task influences the completion of the measures (e.g., Hume & Lawrence, 2005). In a similar manner, in this study participants were asked to complete the rSCS and PS scales before the RSDQ in order to prevent their responses from being influenced by the content of the new scale.

Remote Staring Detection Questionnaire. Building upon the seven items used in the first study, the final four questions of the RSDQ were added at this stage in order to examine its relationship with measures of concepts such as envy: "I believe it is possible to cause something bad to happen to a person by looking at them enviously (i.e., you envy them or something they have), even if they are not aware they are being looked at;" sense of presence: "I believe that you can feel the 'sense that another person is there,' even if you cannot see them;" and intromission/extramission belief: "I believe that when people look at something or someone, energy or something else comes out of their eyes" and "I believe that when people look at something or someone, energy or something else enters their eyes." Cronbach's α for the entire scale was .89 (see appendix for the full scale).

Revised Self-Consciousness Scale. The original SCS (Fenigstein et al., 1975) evaluated self-consciousness as three separate subscales (Burnkrant & Page, 1984; Mittal & Balasubramanian, 1987): private self-consciousness as an index of a person's awareness of inner or personal aspect of self, public self-con-

sciousness as a measure of the self as a social object, and social anxiety. The 22-item revised SCS (Scheier & Carver, 1985) was developed to be more straightforward and more suitable for general populations than the original SCS but can be used interchangeably with it. Due to the general nature of the population sampled in this study, the rSCS was judged to be more appropriate (α = .85, test-retest reliability after 4 weeks: r = .74 to r = .77 for the subscales).

Paranoia Scale. This 20-item scale (α = .91, test-retest reliability after 6 months: r = .70) was designed to measure paranoia in nonclinical populations and was adapted from items in several pathological paranoia scales (Fenigstein & Vanable, 1992).

Results

Factor analysis. An exploratory principle axis extraction with oblimin rotation (Costello & Osborne, 2005; Gorsuch, 1990) was conducted on the 11 items from the RSDQ for the 1,116 participants of the analysis sample. This oblique extraction rotation method was selected as it permits the factors to correlate (Costello & Osbourne, 2005). Two factors were extracted incorporating all of the variables. Communality values, as seen in Table 2, were generally high, with only one (starer h^2 = .24) being below optimal (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2001). However, due to a combination of high communality values for the other variables, the lack of outliers for this variable, the large sample size, the lack of cross-loading, and a high Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin value (.86), it was judged appropriate to leave this variable in the factor solution (cf. Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001).

Rotated loadings of variables on factors, communalities, percentages of variance, factor eigenvalues, and suggested interpretive labels are shown in Table 2. All loadings higher than .45 (20% of the variance) are highlighted in order to demonstrate their contribution to the respective factors (cf. Comrey & Lee, 1992).

Table 2
Rotated Factor Loadings, Communalities (h^2) and Percentages of the Two Principle Extracted Factors (With Suggested Interpretive Labels) From the Oblimin Rotation

Item	Factor 1 (Paranormal Perceptual Awareness)	Factor 2 (Eye-Energy Belief)	h^2
Staree	**.68**	-.03	.44
Starer	**.49**	-.01	.24
Room	**.90**	-.07	.75
Window	**.92**	-.02	.84
1-way Mirror	**.85**	.02	.74
CCTV	**.59**	.19	.49
Evil-eye	-.02	**.83**	.68
Envy	-.11	**.90**	.71
Sense of presence	**.71**	.05	.55
Extramission	.16	**.56**	.44
Intramission	.06	**.53**	.32
Eigenvalues	5.06	1.14	
Percentage of variance	45.97%	10.4%	
Cronbach's α	.90	.81	

In summary, this analysis suggests that the RSDQ measures two factors for this sample: *Paranormal Perceptual Awareness* (seven items) and *Eye-Energy Belief* (four items).

The relationship between personality and belief. Separate correlational analyses followed by a multivariate multiple regression analysis were used to model the predictive influence of the following variables: private self-consciousness (PrSC), public self-consciousness (PubSC), social anxiety (all measured by the rSCS), and nonclinical paranoia on Paranormal Perceptual Awareness (PPA) and Eye-Energy Belief (EEB). Following this, post-hoc individual multiple regression models were tested to examine the relationships between each predictor and the two outcome variables individually.

The overall multivariate multiple regression model was significant, Pillai-Bartlett's Trace $V = .19$, $F(8, 222) = 28.94$, $p < .001$, as were each of the individual predictors when modeled against both PPA and EEB together, PrSC: $V = .04$, $F(2, 1110) = 23.86$, $p < .001$; PubSC: $V = .02$, $F(2, 1110) = 8.47$, $p < .001$; social anxiety: $V = .01$, $F(2, 1110) = 7.18$, $p = .001$; paranoia: $V = .12$, $F(2, 1110) = 73.80$, $p < .001$. The results breakdown for relationships between the predictors and PPA and EEB separately are summarised in Figures 2 and 3.

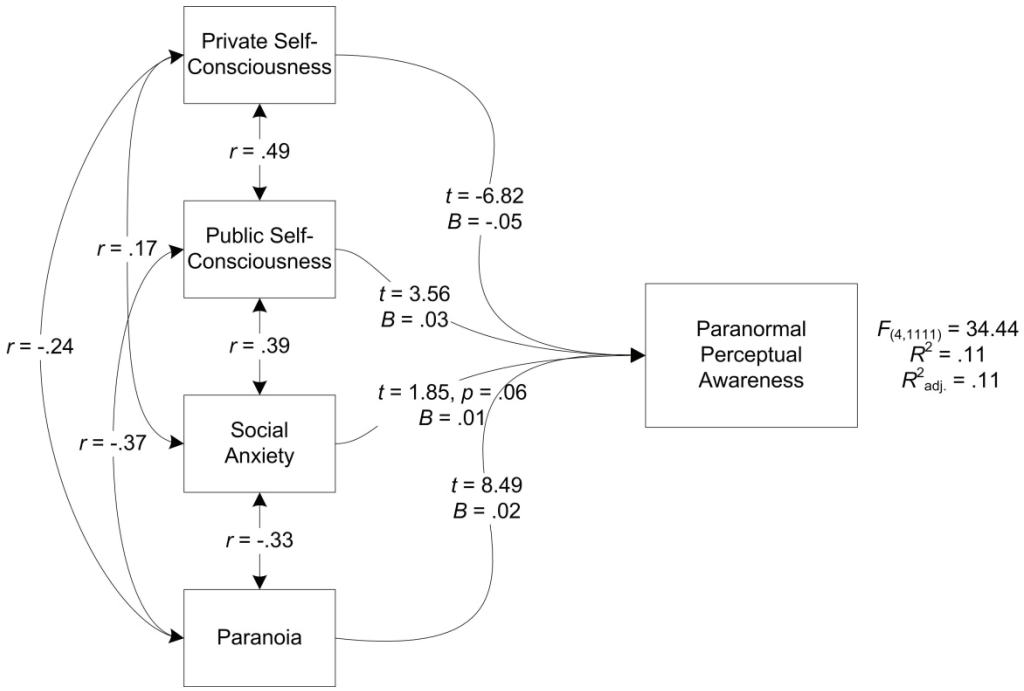

Figure 2. Multiple regression model predicting Paranormal Perceptual Awareness. All p values are < .001 unless otherwise indicated.

Collinearity diagnostics (VIF range = 1.2 –1.58) and adjacent residual statistics (Durbin-Watson = 2.03) for the PPA model were within tolerances (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001). The final regression equation was significant, $F(4, 1111) = 34.44$, $p < .001$, and provided a medium effect size ($R^2 = .11$, $R^2_{adj.} = .11$).

Similarly, adjacent residuals (Durbin-Watson = 1.89) for the EEB model were within tolerances. The final regression equation was significant, $F(4, 1111) = 49.85$, $p < .001$ and provided a medium effect size ($R^2 = .15$, $R^2_{adj.} = .15$).

In summary, the overall multivariate model was significant and the detailed analysis revealed a more complex relationship. Increasing levels of public self-consciousness and paranoia, and decreasing levels of private self-consciousness, predicted higher levels of paranormal perceptual awareness, whereas social anxiety was not a significant predictor. Furthermore, social anxiety and paranoia predicted higher levels of eye-energy belief, with private self-consciousness acting as a negative predictor; public self-consciousness was found not to be a significant predictor.

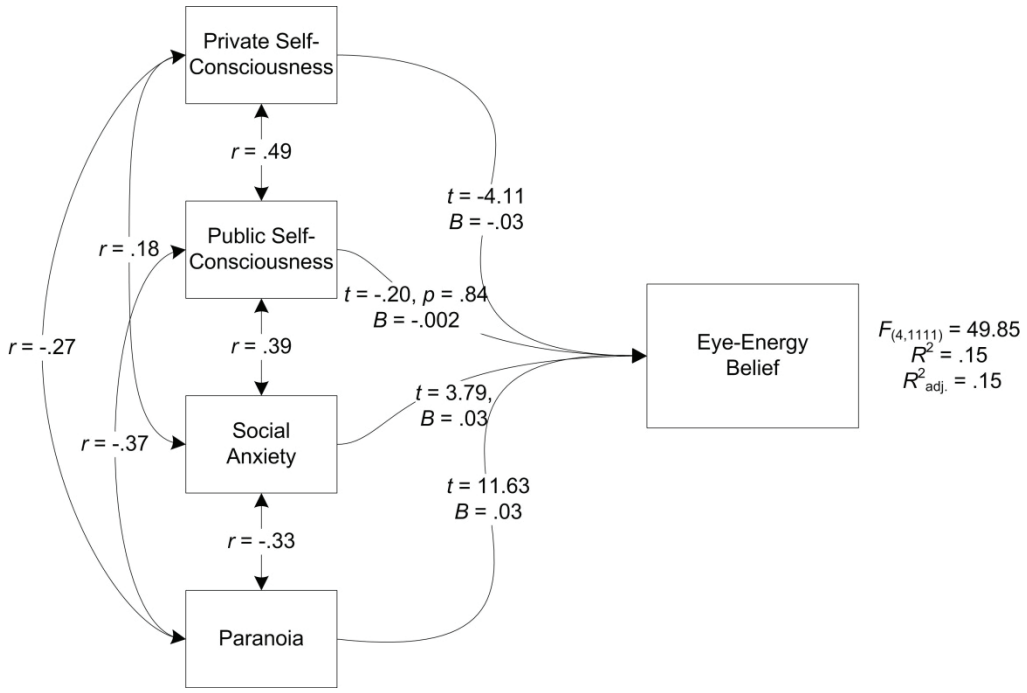

Figure 3. Multiple regression model predicting Eye-Energy Belief. All *p* values are <.001 unless otherwise indicated.

General Discussion

The findings reported in the above studies should be considered tentative pending replication. The exploratory factor analysis in Study 2 revealed that the 11-item Remote Staring Detection Scale is comprised of two factors or subscales: Paranormal Perceptual Awareness, and Eye-Energy Belief. The questions on the Paranormal Perceptual Awareness subscale focus primarily upon experience of, and belief in, remote staring detection and the sense of presence. The questions on the Eye-Energy Belief subscale focus upon questions regarding belief in the evil-eye and in extramission/intromission.

In contrast with previous research suggesting that belief in remote staring detection and belief in the evil-eye are parts of the same overall belief (Cottrell et al., 1996; Sheldrake, 1994, 2000; Staats et al., 2002; Thalbourne & Evans, 1992), the findings of the two studies presented here suggest that they are different but related beliefs. Although both beliefs involve staring activity and the eyes, they appear to be held to different degrees. This difference might be due in part to the evil-eye belief involving negative connotations of envy, impotence, and death (Dundes, 1992; Reminick, 1985), whereas remote staring detection experiences can involve negative (e.g., threat), neutral (e.g., turning around and someone is looking), and positive (e.g., eyes met across a crowded room) emotional connotations. Also, evil-eye belief may represent a specific belief structure that is relevant only to certain cultural backgrounds, whereas belief in remote staring detection may be more generalized.

Similarly, belief in extramission has been proposed as a mechanism to explain belief in remote staring detection (Cottrell et al., 1996; Sheldrake, 2005b, 2005c). However, the results of Study 2 suggest that extramission belief relates more strongly to belief in the evil-eye rather than remote staring detection. Interestingly, the linear decrease in the level of reported belief in remote staring detection as the degree of occlusion between the starer and staree increases, found in Study 1, may indicate some degree of belief in a physical connection between a starer and a staree.

The analysis in Study 2 also extracted remote staring detection and the questions related to the sense of presence as a single factor, demonstrating that these separate phenomena may have an integral un-

derlying belief structure which empirically supports previous suggestions (i.e., Bennett & Bennett, 2000). The implication of this finding is that the feeling of being watched by another could, if strong enough, become a feeling that another person is physically present when they are not. This association between the sense of presence and sense of being stared at may also relate to the *supernatural monitoring hypothesis* (Atkinson & Bourrat, 2011; Gervais & Norenzayan, 2012)—this refers to the belief that a watchful deity perceives human thoughts and actions. Research into supernatural monitoring has demonstrated that such beliefs affect public self-awareness and prosocial behavior, specifically that ". . . thoughts of God might cause many of the same psychological consequences as does being aware that other people are monitoring one's behaviour" (Gervais & Norenzayan, 2012, p. 301). Although belief in remote staring detection may not incorporate a deity per se, the belief that one's actions are being monitored by others may broadly relate to this hypothesis. It is possible that the feeling of being watched, including a sense of presence, may also relate to beliefs that others are observing (and judging) one's actions. This may lead some people to be careful about their behaviour due to perceived paranormal monitoring by others, as opposed to the more religious connotations in the supernatural monitoring hypothesis. In other words, do the feeling of a sense of presence and the feeling of being watched represent the supernatural monitoring hypothesis in action, but with the monitoring being interpreted through the prism of paranormal beliefs as opposed to religious beliefs? More research is required to investigate this subtle distinction further.

In summary, it would appear that paranormal perceptual awareness refers collectively to becoming aware of a stimulus in one's surroundings and using a paranormal framework of interpretation to explain it (i.e., "someone is looking at me," or "something is present that I can feel but cannot see"). Related to this, it would seem that eye-energy belief is the belief that one's stares, which may involve emission of a kind of energy, have a more direct, and potentially negative, impact upon others.

Overall, the personality measures of paranoia and self-consciousness predicted both subscales of the RSDQ. However, the subtle differences in the predictive relationships between the paranoia and self-consciousness measures to the PPA and EEB measures may help to explain mechanisms of belief. Private self-consciousness and paranoia were both significant predictors of PPA and EEB. Private self-consciousness is a measure of an individual's awareness of inner or personal aspects of self (Fenigsten et al., 1975), and it is therefore follows that it would have negative relationships with both PPA and EEB as these are both externally focussed sources of awareness. The Paranoia Scale was a strong positive predictor of both subscales, which is consistent with the findings of Fenigstein and Vanable (1992). Individuals who have paranoid tendencies may be more likely to believe in either or both PPA and EEB. However, social anxiety was a significant predictor of EEB, whereas public self-consciousness was not. Conversely, social anxiety only approached significance as a predictor of PPA, and public self-consciousness is a significant predictor of PPA. This difference in predictive relationships might be due to PPA being explained better by the supernatural monitoring hypothesis. Previously this has been interpreted in terms of individuals' belief that a deity is observing their behaviour, resulting in them engaging in prosocial behaviour (Atkinson & Bourrat, 2011; Gervais & Norenzayan, 2012). However, as mentioned above, this may need to be extended more broadly to "paranormal" observation by others (i.e., feeling of being watched and a sense of presence), relating to a greater propensity for public self-consciousness and an increased likelihood of prosocial behaviour. Future research could examine if high scorers on PPA are more likely to engage in prosocial behaviour.

In contrast, eye-energy belief appears to be driven by a combination of paranoia and social anxiety, with public self-consciousness not being a factor. This argues against supernatural monitoring acting as a potential mechanism. Instead, EEB tentatively suggests an inner focus on how another person's gaze can have an impact upon oneself, potentially with more negative connotations such as envy, social anxiety, and nonclinical paranoia. However, the findings of Study 1 suggested that levels of belief in the evil-eye, which is an important aspect of EEB, are generally lower than remote staring detection and therefore EEB may not be as common as PPA , which may also help to explain the differences between EEB and PPA. The samples for both studies were dominated by participants from the U.K. and U.S. As these two countries have demonstrated low levels of evil-eye belief in anthropological studies (Dundes, 1992), cross-cultural sampling of

populations that have demonstrated higher levels of evil-eye beliefs (e.g., several countries in Africa and the Mediterranean) may provide different results. In addition, the use of the term "evil" when asking the evil-eye questions could have had negative connotations for the respondents and therefore resulted in lower self-reported levels of belief, although it can be challenging to ask about this belief without using this term. These conclusions are also broadly consistent with Cottrell and Winer's (1994) finding that extramission belief (also part of EEB) generally decreases with age. Because the sample I used consisted of people age 18 years and older, lower levels of this belief may be reflected as well. Finally, the EEB factor described only 10.4% of the variance of the model and it only has four items. Collectively, the above findings suggest that the EEB factor is less robust than the PPA factor.

There are some additional limitations to this research. The RSDQ is complicated somewhat by the inclusion of two different Likert scales: one for experience and another for belief. Although this is a strength in many respects as it measures both belief and experience, it does mean that two of the 11 questions were measured on a subtly different scale of measurement. This may explain why the communality score of one of the experience questions was less than optimal. However, the scale as a whole does appear to be valid, but replication employing confirmatory factor analysis would be ideal, along with an assessment of test-retest reliability, and future replications should contain this. An area of improvement in future research involves the measurement of social anxiety, particularly as measured by the SCS. Although social anxiety is of interest due to (a) Staats et al.'s (2002) findings, (b) the relevance of the questions in Social Anxiety subscale to remote staring belief, and (c) the fact that it ultimately predicted eye-energy belief, the use of the Social Anxiety subscale of the SCS may not have been the ideal measure to use for social anxiety. Although included in Fenigstein et al.'s (1975) original factor structure and the factor structure for Scheier and Carver's (1985) revised scale, several more recent analyses of the factor structure of the SCS disregard the Social Anxiety subscale and focus more upon the self-consciousness subscales (e.g., Anderson, Bohon & Berrigan, 1996; Martin & Debus, 1999), finding clear structures without it. Therefore, further research should employ social anxiety measures that were designed from the outset to specifically measure social anxiety, alongside the self-consciousness measures.

As highlighted in the introduction, these beliefs are worthy of isolated study due to their prevalence. However, additional validity of the RSDQ would be demonstrated by comparing it to broader measures of paranormal belief (e.g., Tobacyk, 2004) and magical ideation (e.g., Mason, Claridge, & Jackson, 1995). Both EEB and PPA may also link with persecutory ideation (McKay et al., 2006), which has been associated to differing levels with hallucinatory predisposition and perceptual anomalies (Freeman et al., 2005), and this may help to describe in greater detail the personality characteristics that may underlie these belief structures. Although there were very large sample sizes in both studies, and the predictive relationships involving the paranoia and self-consciousness measures were significant in Study 2, these measures explained only 11–15% of the variance of the PPA and EEB measures. Therefore, additional research is needed in order to explain these beliefs in more detail, focusing upon the supernatural monitoring hypothesis and the personality measures discussed above.

This research has demonstrated that the common belief in the feeling of being watched has a more complex structure than previously envisaged. It is related to the sense of presence and may correlate with, or even have a mechanism similar to, supernatural monitoring. Conversely, belief in the evil-eye and extramission would collectively appear to represent a different belief structure with different relationships to personality measures, particularly public self-consciousness and social anxiety.

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Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Professor David Sheffield, Paul Staples, Malcolm Schofield, Dr. Jane Montague, Dr. John Palmer, Dr. Penelope Junkermann, and two anonymous reviewers for their helpful comments on earlier drafts of this paper. This research was conducted as part of the author's PhD research at the University of Edinburgh.

Appendix

Remote Staring Detection Questionnaire (RSDQ)

All questions are measured on a 5-point Likert scale which ranged from 1 "never" to 5 "all the time" for the first two experience questions, and from 1 "no, not at all" to 5 "yes, definitely" for the rest of the scale.

1. How often have you felt the sensation that someone was staring at the back of your head, and when you have turned around, you have found someone staring at you?
2. How often have you stared at the back of someone's head, and they have turned around and looked at you?
3. I believe that you can detect another person's gaze from across a room, even if you cannot see them.
4. I believe that you can detect another person's gaze when they are looking at you through a window, even if you cannot see them.
5. I believe that you can detect another person's gaze through a one-way mirror (i.e., they can see you, but you cannot see them).
6. I believe that you can detect another person's gaze when they are staring at you via a closed-circuit television camera (CCTV).
7. I believe in the idea of an "evil-eye" (i.e., one person can cause harm to another person just by looking at them, even if that person is not aware that they are being looked at).
8. I believe it is possible to cause something bad to happen to a person by looking at them enviously (i.e., you envy them, or something they have), even if they are not aware they are being looked at.
9. I believe that you can feel the "sense that another person is there", even if you cannot see them.
10. I believe that when people look at something or someone, energy or something else comes out of their eyes.
11. I believe that when people look at something or someone, energy or something else enters their eyes.

Abstracts in Other Languages

German

DER ZUSAMMENHANG DES GEFUEHLS, BEOBACHTET ZU WERDEN,
MIT PARANOIA, SELBST-BEWUSSTSEIN UND SOZIALER ANGST

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG: Das Gefühl, von jemandem beobachtet zu werden, ist eine verbreitete Erfahrung, die experimentell seit über 100 Jahren untersucht wird. Detaillierte Forschungen zum Glauben an dieses Phänomen oder mögliche Beziehungen zu Persönlichkeitsmerkmalen wurden bisher jedoch vergleichsweise wenig durchgeführt. In zwei Studien unter Beteiligung von über 2.500 Personen und unter Verwendung eines neuen Fragebogens konnte gezeigt werden, dass der Glaube an eine *entfernte Blickwahrnehmung* in dem Maße abnahm, wie die Abschirmungen zwischen dem Beobachter und dem Beobachteten zunahmen. Zusätzlich konnte mit Hilfe einer exploratorischen Faktorenanalyse gezeigt werden, dass der Glaube an eine entfernte Blickwahrnehmung komplex ist und auf das Gefühl einer Präsenz bezogen ist (die hier zusammengefasst als *paranormale Wahrnehmungsaufmerksamkeit* – oder PWA -- bezeichnet wird). Er unterscheidet sich auch sowohl von einer Ausstrahlung (d. h. etwas geht vom Auge aus, wenn man etwas anschaut) wie auch dem Glauben an den „bösen Blick" (d. h. eine Person kann einer anderen durch bloßes Anschauen Schaden zufügen). Sowohl die Ausstrahlung als auch die Vorstellungen vom bösen Blick werden hier zusammengefasst als *Glauben an die Energie des Auges* (GEK). Eine multivariate multiple Regressionsanalyse ergab, dass Persönlichkeitseigenschaften wie Selbstbewusstsein und Paranoia signifikant PWA wie auch GEK vorhersagten. Der Glaube an PWA schließt ein verbreiteteres Achtgeben auf jeweil-

ige soziale Interaktionen ein, wenn auch mittels paranormaler Mechanismen interpretiert, wohingegen der GEK eine größere Sorge darüber einschließt, wie der Blick des Anderen einen beeinflussen kann, besonders mit negativen Konnotationen.

Spanish

LA RELACIÓN DE LA SENSACIÓN DE SER OBSERVADO
CON LA PARANOIA, LA CONSCIENCIA DE SÍ, Y LA ANSIEDAD SOCIAL

RESUMEN: La experiencia común de la sensación de ser observado por otro se ha examinado de forma experimental durante más de 100 años. Sin embargo, se ha investigado poco la creencia en este fenómeno en detalle o su posibles relación con las medidas de personalidad relevantes. En dos estudios, con una muestra de más de 2,500 personas y el uso de una nueva medida, la creencia en la detección de miradas a distancia disminuyó a medida que las barreras entre el observador y el observado aumentaron. Además, un análisis factorial exploratorio demostró que la creencia en la detección de miradas a distancia es compleja y se relaciona con una sensación de presencia (denominada colectivamente aquí como *consciencia perceptiva paranormal* o PPA). También es diferente de las creencias en extramisión (es decir, algo que se emite desde el ojo cuando uno mira algo) y en el "mal de ojo" (es decir, que una persona pueda causar daño a otra con sólo mirarla). Ambas creencias se definen aquí como *creencia ojo-energía* o EEB. Un análisis de regresión múltiple multivariado reveló que las medidas de personalidad de autoconsciencia y paranoia predijeron significativamente tanto al PPA como al EEB. Sin embargo, la creencia en PPA implica la consciencia más generalizada de las propias interacciones sociales, aunque interpretada a través de mecanismos paranormales, mientras que la creencia en EEB sugiere una mayor preocupación por la forma en que la mirada de otro puede afectarlo a uno, sobre todo negativamente.

French

LA RELATION DE LA SENSATION D'ÊTRE OBSERVÉ
AVEC LA PARANOÏA, LA CONSCIENCE DE SOI ET L'ANXIÉTÉ SOCIALE

RESUME **:** L'expérience commune de se sentir observé par quelqu'un a été examinée expérimentalement depuis plus de 100 ans. Toutefois, peu de recherches ont été conduites sur les croyances associées à ce phénomène ou leurs possibles relations avec d'autres mesures de personnalité. Dans deux études, un échantillon de plus de 2 500 personnes et employant une nouvelle mesure, la croyance dans la *détection à distance du regard* a diminué en même temps que les barrières entre le regardant et le regardé se renforçaient. De plus, une analyse factorielle exploratoire a démontré que la croyance dans la détection à distance du regard est complexe et associée à la sensation de présence (collectivement associé ici à la *conscience perceptuelle paranormale* ou PPA). Elle est également différente à la fois de l'extramission (c'est-à-dire l'émission de quelque chose depuis les yeux lorsque quelqu'un regarde quelque chose) et de la croyance au « mauvais œil » (c'est-à-dire qu'une personne peut faire du mal à une autre juste en la regardant). Ces deux dernières croyances sont définies ici comme des *croyances aux énergies oculaires* ou EEB. Une analyse de régression multivariable a révélé que les mesures de personnalité de la conscience de soi et de la paranoïa ont significativement prédit à la fois PPA et EEB. Toutefois, la croyance PPA implique une conscience plus généralisée des interactions sociales, bien qu'elle soit interprétée par des mécanismes paranormaux, tandis que la croyance EEB suggère une plus grande inquiétude concernant la façon dont le regard d'un autre va avoir un impact sur soi, en particulier avec des connotations négatives.