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metric units are permitted by law but are little used.

In 45 countries, total population 1775 million, neither system predominates. China and India make up almost two-thirds of this population. In all these countries, indigenous systems are in wide use; English units are also used to a considerable extent; the metric system has been introduced but has made little headway.

Thus out of a population of 3030 million (97 percent of the world's population in 1962), the metric system is used predominantly by 22 percent; the English system by 19 percent; indigenous systems or a mixture of systems by 59 percent. The main conclusion to be drawn from these figures is that unless the metric system is made mandatory (not just permissible) by law, it makes little headway. In short, for the most part metric conversion means compulsion. . . .

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Reference

1. Based upon *World Weights and Measures* (United Nations Statistical Office, New York, 1955), pp. 23-147. Countries with less than 100,000 population are omitted. The population figures are for midyear 1962 and are taken from *Demographic Yearbook 1963* (United Nations, New York, 1964), pp. 148-161.

Parapsychology and Spontaneous Cases

J. B. Rhine and Charles G. Morris wrote independent letters ("Parapsychology not guilty," 27 Aug., p. 910) in response to my letter entitled "A pseudo experience in parapsychology" (18 June, p. 1541). Morris apparently endorsed my conclusions in his first paragraph, but then, like Rhine, chided me for taking a typical story from the "popular parapsychological literature" rather than from the "more serious parapsychological literature." He concluded that the latter "would be the more appropriate and worthwhile for the inquiring scientist." (In the following quotations, all emphasis has been added by me.)

Rhine concluded his letter with the following two sentences: "In my 40 years of work in parapsychology I have not come upon any attempt to base a serious conclusion upon spontaneous case material even when such material does belong to the parapsychological category, as that cited by Alvarez does not. [Rhine apparently missed the point

of my example, which was that *no one* could believe that it had parapsychological content.] If Alvarez or anyone else wishes to become acquainted with the parapsychological literature to which he refers, a request for a reference list will be promptly filled."

Naturally, I consider myself to be an inquiring scientist, and I do not wish to be unfair to Rhine. So I visited our Psychology Library and took down the latest bound volume of the *International Journal of Parapsychology*. Its table of contents listed a paper entitled "Approaches to the study of spontaneous cases." I confirmed the fact that spontaneous cases are those of the type I used as my model; they are sent to parapsychology laboratories by people who have had unusual experiences of the kind I tried to show might well be explained as coincidental. One of the references cited in this paper was an article by Louisa E. Rhine, of the Duke University Parapsychology Laboratory, entitled "Conviction and associated conditions in spontaneous cases" [*J. Parapsychol.* 15, 164 (1951)]. This volume was on the shelf directly below the volume I had just been examining, so it took me only 5 minutes after entering the library to locate Louisa E. Rhine's article.

L. E. Rhine's article is based on a study of 1600 spontaneous cases on file at Duke. She abstracts 19 of the cases in sufficient detail that one can be convinced she is dealing with examples of the type I referred to in the first paragraph of my note. Her concern is with the degree of conviction felt by the subject that his revelation was authentic and not merely coincidental. The last page of her "Discussion" starts with this paragraph:

This case study has shown first that conviction occurs with considerable frequency in spontaneous psi experiences. It is reported from widely different sources and, although in varying proportions, in all types of cases. It is therefore a natural phenomenon to be studied by appropriate research methods and should no longer be overlooked by parapsychological experimenters.

The fact that I was able to discover, in 5 minutes, an example of an "attempt to base a serious conclusion upon spontaneous case material," whereas J. B. Rhine was unsuccessful in 40 years of similar search, may of course be attributable to "luck" on my part.

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