cending the voyeurism implicit in eavesdropping on such an intimate moment in a married couple's life.

- A funny, brilliant pastiche of a baby crawling over glass. Every hand print and foot print lights up as it walks—it sounds simple, but the camera work and lighting make it a magical moment.

- A magnificent introductory tracking shot of bodies (some 98 of them I believe) ranging from the very young to the aged and infirm.

- Richard Gregory's optical illusions are beautifully demonstrated, as well as some of J. Tanner's film on growth.

There are also some boring sequences. A demonstration of foreplay (some in schlieren no less!) and sexual intercourse is as lengthily tedious as it is unnecessary. Whilst scrupulously satisfying edicts of the British Board of Film Censors, it seems designed more to titillate than reveal. It seems to be included, along with other sequences,

to meet some film distributor's estimate of the audience's taste rather than being concerned with the needs and integrity of the subject.

This is, alas, the essence of the film. Too often while pretending to be "vulgar" in the original and honourable sense of the word, the element of voyeurism implicit in the producing of today's "flesh" movies makes the film "vulgar" with all that the modern meaning implies. It thus mars what otherwise might have been an outstanding film.

"Birth, copulation and death,
I should be bored,
I should be bored."

So far as this film is concerned, T. S. Eliot just misses hitting the nail on the head, but he is not far off the mark.

AUBREY SINGER

Correspondence

Soviet Restrictions

SIR,—I am glad to see from Jukes's letter (*Nature*, 228, 589; 1970) that I am not the only one who thinks the letter from Bikerman (*Nature*, 228, 297; 1970) extraordinary. To compare his own failure to obtain a travel grant with the trials of Medvedev is an insult to a very courageous man. No one is presumably preventing Bikerman from leaving the USA, whereas, to judge from Medvedev's testimony, the attitude of the Soviet authorities borders on the psychotic. On balance, it is Bikerman's letter, not Medvedev's book, which is "subtle communist propaganda".

Cahn's subsequent point (*Nature*, 228, 485; 1970) about the non-arrival of Russian speakers at meetings is unfortunately only too common. He might have added that, when they do turn up, they have often been allocated barely two pieces of hard currency to rub together. The consequences of this can be extremely embarrassing.

Yours faithfully,
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Science Citation Index

SIR,—Following E. Garfield's article¹ about heavily cited authors, several apparent shortcomings of the *Science Citation Index (SCI)* have been pointed out²⁻⁴. I could list many other reasons why the *SCI* apparently should not work, and why the "most cited author" list may be misleading.

The reason why the *SCI* does work and the list is valuable becomes clear if we talk about probabilities rather than certainties. Thorough investigations⁵ of citation practices show that various apparent shortcomings do not normally affect the system; they are low probability events or possibilities—in contrast to the high probability that a well cited article reflects a beneficial progressive impact.

Hopefully, the system will be used with discrimination, unlike the usage described by Croom⁴. Hopefully also, the assessment of an author by citation counts will be qualified by a consideration of the activity in his subject area, nature of the research front, and so forth—in conjunction with any other facts or opinions that may assist in the assessment. I think we may assume that Garfield's remark: "... it is up to the scientific community to prevent abuse of the *SCI* ..." means that the

SCI, author lists and such like, should be applied with reasonable intelligence.

A reader of the top of the league table will doubtless reflect on the nature of the author's impact—whether it be inventive, original, interpretive or methodological. Moreover, if our author is cited consistently, year after year, perhaps long after he published, it may be concluded that his impact endures.

The set of subjects symbolized in the references of an article is usually associated with the subjects, concepts, methods, apparatus and so on, described in the text (there are also occasional excesses of undeserved self-citing and bibliographic mutual back-scratching).

4. Locate starting article by words in the *Permuterm Index*: 1.
B. Enter *Citation Index* to locate citing articles. Examine references keyed to specific aspects of the subject in the text: →, 2, 3, 4.
C. Select references symbolizing those aspects: —→, 5, 6, 7.
D. Enter the *Citation Index* to locate articles, —→ 8-10, 11-20, 21-26, which cite the "subjects" 5, 6, 7 respectively.

Fig. 1. Identification of subject aspects—"The physics of superconductors".

Fig. 1 illustrates the citation connexions between articles about "The physics of superconductors". Articles 5, 6 and 7 were rather easily identified with certain aspects of the subject when using the *SCI* without subject expertise. Articles citing them relate to similar aspects.

Fig. 2. Similarity of articles indicated by "bibliographic coupling". Two articles, each containing eight references, have six of them in common.