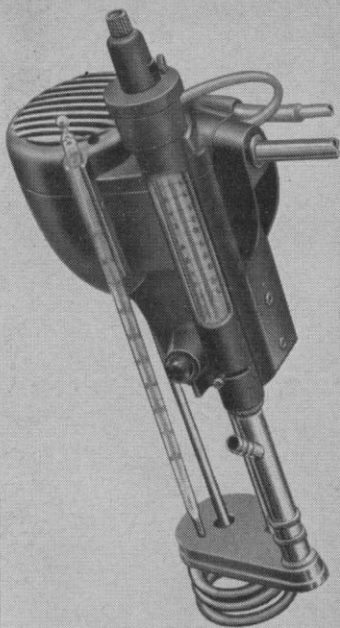


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differences do exist, to force Negroes to meet white standards is to do them no favor. Up north, both as student and teacher, I have been impressed by the Negro's difficulty in meeting white standards. I do not believe that the lower standards down south are the result of poorer teaching by Negroes. Teaching ranks relatively high as a profession among southern Negroes, and the teachers I have met appear to be eager to raise the position of the Negro by way of education.

RALPH W. ERICKSON

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Literature Citation Counting

If one relies upon the enumeration of literature citations to identify significant research [J. H. Westbrook, *Science* **132**, 1229 (1960)], one should be reminded that this technique could be considered a special case of the more general opinion polls which so frequently are called into service to analyze economic and political aspects of our society. The pollster classifies and enumerates subjective opinions. Objectivity is introduced into the poll to the extent that opinion sampling is randomized. The more random the sampling is, the more objective will be the conclusion, and the more uncritical, by whatever criterion, will be the selection of opinions upon which the conclusion is to be based.

Thus it would appear that the enumeration of literature citations of a particular research article would represent the current value judgment of the pedestrian researcher in this particular area of research. Past experience has shown that favorable "average judgment" may lag decades behind the publication of brilliant but radical ideas.

Let us suppose that a scientist knew that he was to be rated according to the frequency with which his publications were cited. He might be extremely reluctant to enter any except the most popular areas of research. Such a system might be more vicious than that of rating him on the basis of the number of his publications.

Judging the merit of a scientific publication ultimately requires a subjective evaluation. Why place greater reliance on the "average judgment" than upon the judgment of those whose wisdom is most respected? To do so is to emphasize past accomplishment rather than potentialities for the future.

JAMES R. KUPPERS

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NEWS

ABOUT

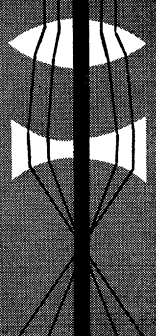
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