1 Scrawlins

A Shorts

A1 When Orson Welles pulled his 1938/10/30 invasion-from-Mars hoax, a terrified 1/6 of the US public found it credible that Martians had deliberately moved to New Jersey. When Russia genuinely took the first photograph of the Moon’s backsides, 1/6 of the US public deemed it a fraud. At the lowpoint of Nixon’s Watergate disgrace, even after the tapes of his selfbuggery were exposed, 1/6 of the US public still believed in him. Question: Are these the same people?

A2 Ever-degenerating US cities are now begging for special Dr.Feelgood vitamin-injections of extra federal money — funds forcibly tax-confiscated from productive citizens. Comments: [a] Cities are where most US money already resides (in, e.g., banks). [b] On the media (owned by forces which also hold plenty of real estate), one doesn’t hear calls for cities assisting their overteeming poor by confiscating US land, which is even more inequitably distributed than US money. (Always the media push is for more tax-money: i.e., soak-the-Middle-Class.) [c] The notion of curing US cities’ woes with more money is as bright an idea as curing an alcoholic with more booze. Disaster-cities (especially NYC) have in the past successfully begged more federal funds, and the inevitable result was not improvement but: just the same old disaster — only bigger.

A3 The outer Solar System is popularly regarded as spookily dim. Actually, the light (of our Sun) falling upon Pluto and Neptune is ordmag 1000 times brighter than the light of the Full Moon falling upon the Earth.

A4 It is remarkable that the largest buildings in human history, the mysteriously non-utilitarian Giza Pyramids, were built at the dawn not the evening of civilization. (Possible partial explanation: §C1. Also: Egypt was the most religious of early ancient cultures.)

A5 Paradox: how can it be legal for some city gov’ts to give away clean needles (so that the drug addict population won’t die off from AIDS)? — but not legal to give away free injectable drugs (in order to kill the profits that spread the drug blight of streetcrime & municipal corruption). The apparent contradiction eases as soon as one wonders if this is not precisely the double-standard policy which druglords would prescribe.

---

1 [Note added 1992/11: Despite Nixon-pal R.Perot’s retrograde-loop 1992 in-out-in pseudo-run for the White House, about 1/6 of the voters bought his act and voted for him. Comment: NOBODY who’s genuinely running for office — i.e., not running as a conniving spoiler — is going to drop out when leading the polls, which is just what Perot did. His subsequent attempts to justify & rationalize this patently inexplicable performance are even more disingenuous than the original show. We probably haven’t seen the last of Perot’s pioneering new business enterprise: dial-a-votesplitter.]

2 Question: Is it accidental that Charon’s nodal line is so nearly coincident with Pluto’s apsidal line?

3 For DR’s speculation regarding the astronomical placement of these monuments, see his lecture at the 1984 Greenwich centenary celebration of the prime meridian’s establishment (Vistas in Astronomy 28:255; 1985).

4 If you like corrupt gov’t, police, & media, then: just keep drugs illegal. Another hitherto-unnoted paradox: the big profits (which purchase control of Congressmen by smarter criminals) connected to hard drugs are contingent on drugs not succeeding with most of the public. (So, black leaders’ suspicion — which I do not share — that drug-sales are injected selectively into ethnic ghettos, is not a priori incredible.) E.g., if a majority of the citizenry got hooked on cocaine, prohibition would be repealed (as for booze in 1933) — and mafia profits would plunge. In case the reader is imagining a personal stake here, it should be added that DR strictly avoids — and makes a pest of himself warning youngsters against — drugs or non-nutritive stimulants of any type. That includes tobacco, alcohol, & caffeine. The happiness-through-chemistry myth promoted by US media ads is a key element in setting up youth for drug-use. I am so turned off by this greedy propaganda that I don’t even take aspirin. (Whether for individual or societal depression, the media singularly promotes quick-sell band-aids, not stable-health longterm solutions.)
A6 The US public believes it longs for truth. So, why does it systematically keep electing two-faced liars to public office?5

A7 Since certain enemies of my late friend Robert Newton have regularly attacked triples (even spelling)6 in his work (e.g., DIO 1.3 fn 264), I cannot resist returning the favor — through the revealing little item that follows. The extremely handsome Journal for the History of Astronomy (Editor-for-Life: Lord Hoskin, University of Cambridge, Churchill College) makes a point of prominently listing, on each issue’s inside front cover, its “Advisory Editors” & their uniformly eminence institutional affiliations. (See §4 fn 65.) For years (at least 1987-1992), this JHA list has rendered “Advisory Editor” N.Sivin’s school (where Isis was edited until 1991) as the University of “Pennsylvania.”7 This despite several restatements of this special-reen-page’s type. Again,8 we ask: how many scholars actually read, even superficially, the journals we cut down forests to make paper for?9

A8 [a] In DIO 1.1 (§2 fn 7), we learned that US politicians (allegedly fighting poverty) have expressed astonishment & surprise that, when poor women (many of whom had virtually no other job prospects) were paid extra money for each child produced, they bore lots of children — and thus poverty expanded rather than contracted. [b] Similarly, the US cancer-industry has lately been fighting breast-cancer with X-rays10 (well known to

5 Lest any reader has failed to connect §§A5 to §§A6, I will add the item that: annual illegal drug profits in the US are ordmag 1000 times the combined (official) salaries of all of the 435 US Congressmen (who write “our” laws). So, does Congress rule vice? Or vice, versa?

6 There are those who would imply incompetence merely because of a scholar’s unorthodox spelling of an ancient’s name. (Note also JHA 1.2 fn 92.) See one of the JHA’s very first review of R.Newton’s output: Centaurus 17:2.173 (O Gingerich 1972). Though not entirely negative, it cites some odd alleged “flaws” or “inexactitudes” in nonhistorian R.N’s work, taking the space to remark that R.Newton’s Ancient Astronomical Observations (John Hopkins 1970) was “spelled” Ibn Yunus as “Ebn Jounis.” Comments: [a] Revealingly (downright embarrassing) trivial. [b] R.Newton 1970 p.304 notes 3 different spellings. [c] There is no uniformly accepted anglicization of this 11th century Moslem astronomer’s name. [d] Throughout, R.Newton 1970 uses “Ebn Jounis”, not Og’s alleged “Ebn Jounis”. [e] This review appears in the prominent HistSCI journal, Centaurus. So, the prominent HistSCI journal’s new chairs Harvard’s HistSCI Dep’t. By contrast, OG casts no aspersions on any specific person’s scholarly ability, during his current review of the work of the Mufia’s deputized satirist-enterainer Noel Coward Swidworth and other HistSCI volk, when he offers the weighty complaint (JHA 2.2.150, 1992): some HistSCI scholars “no longer [choose] to distinguish between principled and unprincipled”. (The fact that HistSCI archons cannot distinguish between principled and unprincipled seems to be of far less interest to them than spelling the words correctly. Reminds one of [Enry Iggins’ tart aside, in My Fair Lady], on the Gallic amatory legend: the French don’t really care what they do, so long as they pronounce it properly.)

7 No imputation of nonbravery should be attached to DIO’s name for agile longtime debate-ducker Swidworth, who has earned his rank as top Mufia humorist by his 1983 implication that the actual coward in the Polesmy Controversy is R.Newton: see DIO 1.13 §D7. [Correction: Original edition erred on the Gallic-aside source.]

8 DIO’s mailing label brought the mis-spelling to Sivin’s attention (exclamatorily) in 1991.

9 What’s-left-of-the-left (WLL) keeps suicidally promoting this “cure” for poverty. Instead of having the next generation raised largely by loving, stable middle-class couples, the WLL effectively insists it’s less demeaning to have much of the next generation instead raised by poor single mothers at least one of whose “jobs” is collecting child-welfare cheques, with gov’t social-worker bureaucrats riding paternally benign on the show. (The theory is: just pay enough welfare, and poverty will atrophy naturally. As wacky as the Reaganomics-principle and principal”. (The fact that HistSCI archons cannot distinguish between principled and unprincipled seems to be of far less interest to them than spelling the words correctly. Reminds one of [Enry Iggins’ tart aside, in My Fair Lady], on the Gallic amatory legend: the French don’t really care what they do, so long as they pronounce it properly.)

10 Meeting the weighty complaint (JHA 2.2.150, 1992): some HistSCI scholars “no longer [choose] to distinguish between principled and unprincipled”. (The fact that HistSCI archons cannot distinguish between principled and unprincipled seems to be of far less interest to them than spelling the words correctly. Reminds one of [Enry Iggins’ tart aside, in My Fair Lady], on the Gallic amatory legend: the French don’t really care what they do, so long as they pronounce it properly.)
D Heritage

D1 Given the state of the world (which justifies massive political cynicism), I am occasionally asked why I remain happy and optimist.

D2 Simple: for no cost beyond merely getting born, we not only partake of the beauties of nature (simple blue of sky and smell of grass&flowers, the visual grandeur of terrrestrial clouds or Mirandan topography), but additionally we become beneficiaries of the art&genius of men (or their schools) such as: Homer, Aristarchos, Archimedes, Lucretius, Michelangelo, Marlowe—"Shakespeare", Tycho-Kepler, Newton-Halley, Voltaire, Lagrange-Plagge, Beethoven, Turner, Berlioz, Darwin, Liszt-Wagner-Mahler-Strauss, Russell, Einstein.

D3 For the same admission price, we video view the Moon, Halley’s Comet, and even — thanks primarily to Ed Stone & Gary Flandro — the gorgeous swirling blue giant planet Neptune (my 2nd favorite celestial body). In this respect, even Neptune’s discoveror, Leverrier, was not so fortunate as we.

D4 Dramatic entertainment abounds. Uplifting music, deeper and far more varied than that available to the wealthiest king of 2 centuries ago ( & even then only upon his prearranged occasion) now floods the humblest US home, at the merest flick of a switch.

D5 How can anyone stay depressed or blanket-misanthropic, for even a few consecutive minutes, when humanity has made such riches an inheritance-in-common to all?

E A Puzzle for the Ages

E1 Greg tells me that his twin brother Chris was born 2 minutes after him. But, on Greg’s 8th birthday, Chris had yet to celebrate a birthday.

E2 Question: what is Greg’s age?

E3 The answer will appear in a later issue of DIO. (Hint for those attempting to solve this puzzle: it helps if you aren’t a Vice President of the Royal Astronomical Society.) The first person to send the correct solution to DIO receives: [i] a free DIO subscription, and [ii] mention in our next issue.

F Educational Ironies

F1 Every time you bet on a sports hero’s performance, you contribute to creating an economic motive for him to: [a] privatelly bet against himself, [b] throw the contest you bet on, & [c] thereby walk off with a piece of your gambling loss.

F2 Likewise, every time you answer a pollster’s political question, you are telling politicians exactly how to lie to you.

F3 When evaluating polls, citizens feel protected by their imagined ability to see through most con-men — a confidence which fails to account for sample-filtration, by naïvely assuming that polls are like most of the breed. After all, it’s obvious that: the con-artist who least appears to be, will be the most successful — and thus the most tooobiquitous.

F4 Wait ‘til a fraction of the money, stolen (largely by real-estate-speculators) during the Reagan-era Savings&Lootings deregulation&kickback orgy, starts filtering into the 1992 election process, paying for mass-befuddlement advertisements,15 to help elect most of the very politicians who made it all possible. Lucky lobotomy is still legal.

G Contradiction?

G1 US leftists believe that the ruling gov’t-media combine is a creature of business, and thus their enemy. Yet this ruling combine agrees with the Right’s support of: "education"— rehab, gun-control, treating every Sin (but homosexuality) as illness, the holy mission of preventing overcrowded jails,16 preserving the sanctity of AFDC, welfare, forced integra­tion [except for the rich], affirmative action, massive Latin immigration, anti-racism, homosexuality-is-just-another-lifestyle, & opposition to using birth control for social engi­neering or to using capital punishment as crime-deterrent or justice-symbol.

G2 US rightists believe that the same gov’t-media combine is a creature of Liberals, and thus their enemy. Yet this combine agrees with the Right’s support of: anti-socialism, anti-communism, the sacred virtues of capitalism, the anathematization of suck-the-rich schemes, real estate development of every square mm of US turf, [mass-paranoid belief in — thanks primarily to Ed Stone & Gary Flandro — the gorgeous swirling blue giant planet Neptune (my 2nd favorite celestial body). In this respect, even Neptune’s discoveror, Leverrier, was not so fortunate as we.]

G3 No one who wishes to understand who rules the US and how, can ignore these strikingly persistent apparent contradictions. Both sides explain such anomalies by presuming mere-pretense media-support for its own side’s above-cited sacred tenets. But, a hypothesis which may facilitate resolution: are the foregoing “Left” & “Right” media positions really contradictory?17

H The Rehab Perpetual-Emotion Mirage

H1 Every TV’snews discussion of possible solutions to continuing guerilla-war-level US city crime is a variation on the same error: seeking the chimera of “rehab”. Whatever the TV’snews-approved-panacea (social programs, in-prison education, etc.) — it’s always the same delusion: if we get smart enough to throw the right lever, we can rehab the social misfits who commit crimes.

H2 But the sad truth is: we will never get that smart, because we aren’t even bright enough to realize that: [a] no such salvation is feasible here at present, without intolerable rehab-industry costs18 to the noncriminal majority; [b] a smart society’s rst salvage-priority is to decent citizens (not to criminals), who deserve immediate (not someday) relief from street terrorism. For decades, “permissible” public discourse on preventing crime has implicitly presumed that, if we just tinker a little longer with the rehab-machine, we’ll finally turn-the-corner on crime. (Remember the Vietnam War morass caused by light-at-the-end-of-the-tunnel propaganda?) Why does the media not ask if such a cure isn’t simply an emotional-wish delusion,19 as wise observers (such as George Bernard Shaw) have long

14 The most prominent person ever to warn the public of this reality was: Ronald Reagan (1986/1/26 HyperBowl halftime chat). An admirable act — and done before the most apt audience possible.

15 Also: “news”-spot propaganda, massaged “polls”, & the jokes of whoring media “comics”.

16 One steady thread of consistency: whichever position TV’snews adopts (“Left” or “Right”), the opposing viewpoint is systematically slighted.

17 The most prominent person ever to warn the public of this reality was: Ronald Reagan (1986/1/26 HyperBowl halftime chat). An admirable act — and done before the most apt audience possible.

18 One steady thread of consistency: whichever position TV’snews adopts (“Left” or “Right”), the opposing viewpoint is systematically slighted.

19 By contrast, the overcrowding of neighborhoods (fn 22) is not discussed.
suggested? Face it, rehab is statistically no more effective now than it was, 30 years of criminologist-BS ago. In fact, it is probably a lot less so. Why depend on receiving the long-falsely-promised benefits of progress from a field that is actually in regress? 

Moreover, even if we assume (purely hypothetically) that criminologists, by studying murderers instead of fying them, finally did discover a treatment which seriously diminished criminal behavior; the entire effort would turn out to have been wasted — because this treatment would instantly be attacked & gutted (by ACLU & co) as over-invasive and degrading to persons’ & groups’ dignity: who-can-play-God20 by tampering with human individuality? . . .

Obviously, prison-rehab is not the solution to crime. But the only efficacious long-range social solution (see DIO 1.1 §2 §D) is not politically allowable, while the sham of allegedly rehab-educating The Botched,21 is the only discussable gradual solution (§M1). So US streetcrime cannot be seriously rolled back.

Regardless of the longer social panaceas: what of the millions of career criminals already on the street? Even if one lacks the realism to recognize rehab as an eternally-out-of-reach mirage, it is undeniable (on the past record) that it is very far from a sure thing. So, does an intelligent nation gamble its future stability on the thoroughly, repeatedly self-discredited rehab-approach — or do we finally demand that another option be tested, at least in some sections of the US? What other option is available? (And why is it not seriously discussed on TV ‘snews’?) The short-term answer is: spend what it takes to lock up violent criminals PERMANENTLY.22 Lock them up with each other (which shouldn’t be so bad, if rehab is turning them all into pacifists), instead of regularly paroling or springing them back among those of us who aren’t wealthy enough to live way out in relatively streetcrimeless posh suburbs — as do the genius architect-profiteers of the current US streetcrime-situation: judges, lawyers, shrinks, as well as network ‘newsanchors & owners.23

I Elfenfasnia

I1 Question: What’s the most expensive movie ever made? Answer: the Reagan-Bush Presidency. US budget overruns are now a billion dollars per day. (Normal cinema’s definition of Boxofficebombdom, Heaven’s Gate, lost less than a mere $1,000,000/day.)24

I2 Think of it in terms of sheer achievement. Under Reagan-Bush, the Republican Party’s Presidency spends money faster than even a Democratic Congress’ tax-fangs can suck it out of us. (Again: a billion dollars PER DAY faster.) No one previously thought such a feat possible.

I3 The annual cost of servicing the Reagan-Bush debt now equals the entire annual budget deficit — i.e., it is now, annually, costing the US as much to go broke (circularly

than some degree of quarantine has been that it’s supposed to be so difficult to catch AIDS, since it usually spreads sexually. Just the sort of bright reasoning you pay Experts millions of tax dollars for. About on the order of opposing population planning by claiming it’s difficult to get pregnant. (One other related AIDS-related illusion: the media repeatedly plugs celebrity AIDS-benefits as allegedly raising money for research. Actually, AIDS-lobby celeb-events are raising money largely not for medical scientists but for lawyers & agents, to influence politicians to have you the taxpayer fund the medical research. Whether this is wise or not can be argued. But the implicit deception is indefensible.) Finally, the “education” cure has been defended by arguing: “even if it saves just one life, it’s worth it.” Perhaps. But no one on TV ‘snews has ever suggested the same defense for any variant or degree of quarantining.

20 Woody Allen has the best reply (to the old who-are-you-to-play-God line): “somebody has to.”

21 Credit: my stepfather’s old friend, Henry Mencken.

22 TV ‘news will predictably rebel at the hideous indignity of Crowded Jails, which it regards as a social blight far more intolerable than nighty-plotting, shootings, street-shootings of innocent citizens.

23 More apt yet: why not arrange that all paroled criminals will live in (or next door to) the homes of the same judges, shrinks, etk that spring them?

24 See H.K.M. Medved The Hollywood Hall of Shame 1984 p.184 (“Passing the Megabuck”) for a funny-repulsive account of the Heaven’s Gate culprits’ attempts to blame each other for their disaster. This edifying spectacle provided a pilot script for the eternal White House-Congress budget-responsibility finger-pointing nicorn.
K Further Inductions

K1 Evolution of the Specie: From our records of late 20th century academe, we conclude that nothing refined a scholar’s creativity and ethics better than: touching and counting money.29 Or being a publisher: usually the same thing. Academic publications in such emotionally secure fields as History of science (Hist.sci) were filled with scholarly articles and reviews which went out of their way to extol the omniscient wisdom and exalted character of the businessman-scholar archons who people reviewed committees and—or ran these very journals — or otherwise controlled the financial wellbeing of the scholars writing the articles that worshiped archons. The only mystery here is why these archon paladins were not canonized to a man, since, according to the consistent Hist.sci journal record: [a] No editor or society officer ever did anything more sinful than misspelling. [b] They were the brightest of the bright,30 not to mention generous, inspirational, rigorously fair & neutral. (We know that all such characterizations were true, because — being selfconfident models of archonic virtue — these journals would never have allowed or endorsement by printing mere flattery.) [c] No society officers or editors were ever censorial or vindictive. Or even cross. (Though they bore one. See under DIO, below: §K2.) It is still unclear what chemical was increasingly being added to 20th century currency, that made the much-touching of it so salutary to character.

K2 Near-Misses: Sad to say, at the very dawn of the Third Millennium, the above-cited otherwise-unruffled chorus of praise was — obstreperously and always erroneously — interrupted by the persistent dissent of an odd & trilling journal calling itself DIO. Happily, all intelligent scholars (i.e., those that spent time counting money, in reality or in dreams) agreed that DIO was never actually right about anything — and should be renamed Diatribe. (That the publisher was beyond all reason was notorious: e.g., if power-archons suppressed & secretly slandered him — which sacred duty is, after all, their privilege & prime Earthly mission — well, DIO would actually criticize this. Out in public, mind you. Who can fathom the folly of it?) Happily, no copies survive; and DIO is now almost exclusively known through the sparse remains of a flood of refutations, which — by a remarkable coincidence — burst forth immediately after the scurrilous publisher’s sole archonally-approved feat. (Death was presumably hurried31 by his fanatical refusal to partake of the wellknown health benefits of cigarettes: §J7.) These refutations are almost exclusively by lower-eclcher castrati. But their accounts of his work, being as accurate as the rest of the output of the handsome reputable Hist.sci journals of that day, are to be trusted implicitly, and the refutations built upon these accounts are completely convincing. Another amazing coincidence: we now know that the positions taken by the publisher (whose very name is lost) were quite frequently ‘almost correct’.32 e.g., he (almost) discovered such now-accepted positions as: [a] heliocentists’ work underlay all sophisticated ancient astronomy, [b] sph trig existed by the 2nd century BC and differential sph trig by the 2nd century AD, [c] Tycho faked ten stars of his Catalog, & [d] R. Amundsen was first to both the Earth’s Poles. However, in every case — yet another amazing coincidence — the reasoning produced by DIO was found wanting,33 and so the discovery-credit very properly34 went elsewhere. According to a controversial scholium (incompletely-erased, unfortunately), which for a moment was found wanting,35 DIO was said to have claimed that, in all such cases, those parties now receiving credit for the discovery had published material ignorant-of or (usually)36 outright-opposing it — right up until DIO produced evidence which changed opinion. But the admittedly fragmentary now-extant record supports not a bit of this transparent grumbling. Discovery [a] has long since been assigned to its lifetime supporter, N.C.Swerdlow; [b] went to math genius G.M.Toomer, [c] to O Gingerich & J.Evans (who pointed out alternate spellings37 of Hven & Wandsbeck, sloppily ignored by DIO), and [d] to National Geographic, which (according to the newspaper38 of 2100 AD) had always held that Amundsen was first to the N.Pole in 1926 and that R.Peary had just innocently dreamed his 1909 claim.

L Collective Shamnesia?

L1 The reader may suppose that §J7 is overstrong; however, it should not be amnesia-forgotten that Hollywood films have been used for most of this century to glamorize smoking. Did this occur by chance? L2 When it began to be widely rumored c.1950 that smoking was medically suspect, one could count upon certain soothed film producers to help out the poor misunderstood tobacco lobby. (Only the hardest cynic could suppose that a film’s kindness to weed-interests and reviews which went out of their way to extol the omniscient wisdom and exalted character of a one-newspaper nation even before 2000 AD.) This was obviously not regress but progress. Like unto the triumph of monotheism in the 4th century AD.

32 §3 C15.
33 See likewise at JHA 1.2 fn 58.
34 For Journal for Hysterical Astronomy 1.2 §J2, fn 127, & fn 148.
35 E.g., DIO 1.1 §3 [D1] mistakenly-if-understandably made Muflia singer-entertainer Noel Coward Swerdlow’s middle initial “T” (presumably for “ToEdLine”; best pronounced with extreme care) instead of the correct “C” [fn 6]. Thus, due to this grievous error, the credit for discovering the first Hipparchan (UH) solar theory [DIO 1.1 §6, DIO 1.2 §G10] naturally fell in due time to the renowned org-enit-stoarchs of the Muflia.
36 E.g., §3 C15.
37 For a certain OG’s attention to spelling convention, see fn 6.
38 Throughout the 21st century, newspapers’ numbers had varied in roughly inverse proportion to the number of people on the planet. And, by 2100 AD, it was realized that, given the commendable uniformity of viewpoint in newspapers, no one would lose anything of value if the world (which was now so packed that it was one big city) got efficient — so the whole Earth became a one-newspaper town. (TV newsw had actually made the US a one-newspaper nation even before 2000 AD.) This was obviously not regress but progress. Like unto the triumph of monotheism in the 4th century AD.
39 [Note added 1993: While here on the subject of corporal infaud, I’ll flog a pet beef of mine. When Public Television Runs an archival film of the Kaiser or the Czar, I object to seeing them strutting about like Charlie Chaplin — an all-too-common desecration. Cause: films of that time were made at 16 frames/sec; instead of the 24 frames/sec which became standard once talking pictures came on; but the old ones tend to be run at the modern speed, thus 50% too fast. Remedy: television uses 30 frames/sec, so if historical films were videoed at two film frames for each TV frame, the match would be within about 10% of fidelity — about as accurate as the hand-driven cameras of that era achieved, maybe. However, instead of taking such film, most producers just slopey convert old film, most at the standard modern 5/4 ratio (30/24), which is used to convert current 24 frame/sec films into video. The 1925 sci-fi film, The Lost World (based on a 1912 A.C.Doyle novel which DR has long belittled was triggered by M.Conway’s from the same comments upon PWacek’s 1910 RoyGeorgSoc lecture, repod at p.530 of Geogr [35.5:53:13] has been modernly released after conversion at a 3/2 ratio — which is better than 5/4, but still insufficient for faithful reproduction of what original audiences saw. It is obvious that the technology for accurate conversion exists, but it is instead being used for less noble ends. At least since 1987, some broadcasters have been quietly scrunching (speeding up) modern films by having them specially pre-converted at a frame ratio higher than the correct 5/4. (Noted in some media at that time; then largely forgotten outside the trade press.) The original alibi for this tampering was that
always been this lobby’s strong suit, as we see from a particularly precious cinema scene, which I have extracted from our Doubletakes Dep’t, in order to display it, unabridged, in a special niche here.

L3 In the highly-promoted 1951 scifi film *When Worlds Collide* (mixing Velikovskian & Noah’s-Ark Biblical themes), we encounter the following immortal exchange (between 2 of the main personae, each later vying for roundfirm scientist Barbara Rush’s affections), in the office of an astronomical observatory, 10th into the film:

Dr.Drake: You smoke? [Offers Mr.Randall an American cigarette.]

Mr.Randall: Thanks, I’ll try one. [Just in from S.Africa, Randall pulls out a cig of his own & offers it to the Doctor.] Have a South African one. You — ah — part of this deal, Doctor, this stargazing?

Dr.Drake: No. No, I confine my gazing to eye, ear, nose & throat. I’m an M.D. [Immediately lights own cig.]

M Masterpiece Theatrical Integrity

M1 As tentatively predicted, the Royal Astronomical Society of London has so far printed no correction in response to the *Journal for Hysterical Astronomy*’s recomputations of the magnificently innocent RAS-published mismath (*QJRAS* 1985 p.514) of RAS Vice President David Hughes (*J.HA* centerpiece of *DIO 1.1*: §B-§E & Table A).

M2 As for the same RAS Vice President’s alleged calendric proof (*Journal for the History of Astronomy* 1986 p.189) of alleged British priority in seeing Comet Halley (*DIO 1.1* §G): the *JHA*’s esteemed Editor-for-Life has indicated no interest in correcting that hilarious bit of typically unrefered nonsense. (The *JHA* & *QJRAS* annual subscription fees are each ordmag $100.)

M3 These journals’ contempt for the truth is exceeded only by their contempt for their own loyal subscribers’ intelligence & independence. (The implicit whatayagonnadoaboutit presumption is that no scholar will complain. Or even inquire. Is the presumption correct?)

M4 And the Brits put on such convincing airs about honour and all that. Well, didn’t you *Masterpiece Theatre* fans ever wonder how Britain keeps producing the world’s very best actors?

---

40 The book (on which the film is based) was co-authored by Edw.Balmer & (the famous) Philip Wylie: *When Worlds Collide* 1933 & *After Worlds Collide* 1934; rebound & published together in 1950, the same year Velikovsky’s *Worlds in Collision* appeared. (A neat instance of mutually-boosting publicity.) The film’s special effects are occasionally quite effective, though nothing in it is as otherworldly as the gooie sanctity at the start and end — laughably out of place today.