

‡1 Scrawlings

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 backside, 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.¹ 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 Pluto² 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,³ 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).⁴ 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-annoted 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 trifles (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* eminent 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 resettings of this special-preen-page’s type. Again,⁸ we ask: how many scholars actually *read*, even superficially, the journals we cut down forests to make paper for?

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 paid⁹ 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 (wellknown 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 a certain OG’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 “inelegancies” in nonhistorian RN’s work, taking the space to remark that R.Newton *Ancient Astronomical Observations* (Johns Hopkins 1970) spelled “Ibn Yunus” as “Ebn Jounis”. Comments: [a] Revealingly (downright embarrassingly) 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 Iounis”, not OG’s alleged “Ebn Jounis”. [e] This review appeared in the prominent Hist.sci journal, *Centaurus*. [f] Reviewer OG Gingerich now chairs Harvard’s Hist.sci Dep’t. By contrast, OG casts no aspersions on any specific person’s scholarly ability, during his current review of the work of the Muffia’s deputed satirist-entertainer Noel Coward Swerdlow and other Hist.sci folk, when he offers the weighty complaint (*JHA* 23.2:150; 1992): some Hist.sci scholars “no longer [choose] to distinguish between principle and principal”. (The fact that Hist.sci 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 Egging’s] 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.) No imputation of nonbravery should be attached to *DIO*’s name for agile longtime debate-ducker Swerdlow, who has earned his rank as top Muffia humorist by his 1983 implication that the actual coward in the Ptolemy Controversy is R.Newton: see *DIO* 1.1 ‡3 §D7. [Correction: Original edition erred on the Gallic-aside source.]

⁷ *DIO*’s mailing label brought the mis-spelling to Sivin’s attention (exclamatorily) in 1991.

⁸ See here at ‡3 §C16 & *DIO-JHA* 1.2 §B4 (the *JHA*’s “Winter Equinox”), or the previous issue’s “Royal Comets” (*JHA* 1.1 ‡8 §E8).

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 paternalistic herd on the show. (The theory is: just pay enough welfare, and poverty will atrophy naturally. As wacky as the Reaganomics-notion that if you cut taxes enough, the unburdened economy’s reborn tax-base will make up the gov’t revenue-loss. One is naturally impressed by the dementia of these theories’ creators — but I reserve my particular awe for the straightfaced pols & press who peddle them to the public.) Well, we’ve now experienced several generations of replacing real parents with bureaucrats, and the inner-city results suggest — to right-thinking observers’ shocked surprise — that the gov’t makes a lousy parent. (Nonetheless, all known US political parties refuse effectively to interfere in this eternal cycle with anything but disapproving gas & ineffectual bandaids.) Note: Scandinavia has shown (so far) that welfare can be made effective & noncyclical — and not a mainline subsidy to druggpushers. But the US media seems singularly uninterested in exploring what differences have made the N.European approach work.

¹⁰ Breast X-rays are now aggressively marketed under the sales-euphemism, “mammograms” (not “breast X-rays”). The implicit medical strategy is called “risk-benefit”, which translates as: OK, so we may lose a few patients to X-ray-caused breast cancer — nonetheless, the *claimed* benefits of early-detection outweigh that (allegedly trifling) regrettable iatrogenic downside. Few patients are made aware of this ruling logic, in order that they can make an informed choice between options. Are mammograms simply another fad (like tonsillectomies, a generation ago) which provide a robust steady income to medbiz? And: is or is not the cancer industry just juggling statistics, in its TV terror-tactic mammogram-hustling ads’ claims that mammograms improve survival odds? The statistical details

cause cancer) — while affecting bewilderment that net US breast-cancer cases (& deaths) are rising instead of falling. But, not to worry: the good news is that trends [a]&[b] have increased,¹¹ not decreased, the business of (& need for) [a] our pols & [b] our docs.

A9 In our obviously Lucifer-founded world, the solution to Satanists’ vexing Problem-of-Good is simple: the anomalous existence of goodness must be blamed upon rebellious man’s free will. (Let’s nobody ask what created man & the good in him . . .)

A10 When the CIA was deputed (& granted vast unseen sums) to protect us from no-doubt-imminent foreign invasion, one of the cuter facets of this prank on the public was: good-old-reliable Congress was deputed to protect us from the CIA. Result: CIA-connected persons (e.g., ex-CIA chief Bush) running the US. (Suggestion: try imagining the extent of the secret funds the CIA has at its disposal, whenever it wishes to affect domestic politics.)¹²

A11 Tons of tomes have been written on gov’t solutions to human problems. Yet the most important solution is: how can one place these solutions into power? This question is a reminder that in gov’t matters, as with inductive problems in physical science: there is no systematic method of solution. (If there were, we would have quickly eliminated all civil woes and solved all physical mysteries.)

B Doubletakes

B1 S.Allen (1955): I’m scared that if I think about religion, I might become an atheist and go to hell.

B2 *Life* magazine (1936/12/7 p.63) explained the troubles, between the notorious slosh-buckler (& sometime actor) Errol Flynn [1909-1959], and his then-wife, starlet Lili Damita [1901-1994], as partly due to a lifestyle contrast: “Mr.Flynn, it seemed, liked a quiet outdoor life and Miss Damita liked night clubs and parties.”

B3 Late-Autumn 1991 Jenny Jones promo for her new housewife-catering network talkshow (debuting 1991/9/16): Why do men call our soap-operas dumb, and then watch 5 hours of wrestling? *DIO* solicits inductive comment upon the evolution that produced the final version of this ad. [See *DIO* 4.3 ‡13 fn 2.]

B4 How deeply the media is — yes, singular — in the totalitarian grasp of hucksters may be measured by the equally singular fact that: it never even identifies (much less bestows long-overdue praise upon) those decent celebrities (e.g., Vidal, Brando) who refuse to prostitute their names by doing commercials to sell products whose payoffs (“ad billings”) feed the media. How can TV ’snews condemn bribe-taking by public figures — when the media’s own incessant fiscal-lifeflood ads are performed in return for fiscal bribes?

C Germs

C1 The more time-saving devices are invented, the less spare time we have.

C2 Ever heard a druglord (Philip Morris, Busch, or mafia) bemoan tax money flushed down the poverty-welfare cycle?

C3 If God existed: humans, politicians, theology, & π would all be rational.¹³

can be dressed up, but the bottom line cannot. And that bottom line is a startling, publicly-undiscussed contradiction: [a] thanks to mass mammograms, early detections of breast cancer are way up; so [b] why haven’t death rates fallen just as dramatically? *Or fallen at all, for that matter.* (Keep in mind that similar Experts took most of this century to finally figure out that painful — & expensive — radical mastectomies were no better than the modest “modified” version. Halsted, the Johns Hopkins doctor-addict who established the radical’s preeminence, got *rather* rich. It is said that he used to send his shirts to Paris to be pressed.)

¹¹ The US medical establishment’s spectacular failure regarding the spread of AIDS (the worst record of any technologically advanced nation) has likewise created a fiscal bonanza for that very establishment (fn 19). Inept US business CEOs’ gross salaries (especially the golden-parachute-fad) have rightly been attacked as merely reward-for-failure. Why has there not been equal recognition of the AIDS-mediz lobby’s similar dynamic?

¹² [Note added 1992/11: see fn 1.]

¹³ And Gozzi & Puccini would have lived to immerse themselves in *Turandot*’s 1926/4/25 La Scala opening.

D Heritage

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

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 terrestrial 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-Laplace, Beethoven, Turner, Berlioz, Darwin, Liszt-Wagner-Mahler-Strauss, Russell, Einstein.

D3 For the same admission price, we video-visit 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 discoverer, 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 motive¹⁴ for him to: [a] privately 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 toobiquitous.

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.

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

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

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 Left’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 an invisible deity], the iniquity of any foreign leader who won’t salaam to the US State Dep’t, & (the mafia’s Eleventh Commandment) the eternal illegality of drugs.

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 first 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

¹⁶ By contrast, the overcrowding of neighborhoods (fn 22) is not discussed.

¹⁷ One steady thread of consistency: whichever position TV ’snews adopts (“Left” or “Right”), the opposing viewpoint is systematically slighted.

¹⁸ We tend to think of “costs” just in terms of dollars, which permits the rehab-industry forever to portray skeptics as calloused cheapskates. So let’s get to the reality: yes, we might (might) be able to cure most violent criminals — *IF* half the noncriminal citizenry were converted to fulltime social workers. The question is: can a functioning society tolerate such a drain on its labor force? Obviously not, unless we wish to sink — even more rapidly than now — toward the level of a Third World nation. Question: given the tens of thousands of hours of TV ’snews time expended on coverage of the crime issue during the last generation, why are these simple social realities (just laid out here in a few lines) *never* mentioned?

¹⁹ TV ’snews also pretended there might be a cure for AIDS, and only began to suggest otherwise much later — after the time had passed when some version of a quarantine might have been most effective. (For the record: DR has held from the outset that there’d never be a cure. But the key question should not have been will-there-be-a-cure, but rather: why risk the national health on the arrogant *assumption* that there will be? I.e., where are we headed if this assumption turns out to be wrong? Question: can you think of other national problems where similar arrogance — and unwillingness to admit the possibility of Noble-Experiment error — is ensuring permanent policy failure?) The US medical establishment designed the strategy that has ensured a more rapid spread of AIDS here than in any other comparably sophisticated nation. This establishment has been punished by reaping billions of dollars from the AIDS epidemic (fn 11). Incidentally, the main argument (of our genius-experts on AIDS) for “education” rather

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*?

H3 Moreover, even if we assume (purely hypothetically) that criminologists, by studying murderers instead of frying 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? . . .

H4 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 Botched²¹ is the only discussable gradual solution (§M1). So US streetcrime cannot be seriously rolled back.

H5 Regardless of longterm 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-profiters of the current US streetcrime-situation: judges, lawyers, shrinks, as well as network 'snewsanchors & owners.²³

I Elefantasia

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 Boxofficebomdom, *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 about 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 common 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 'snews will predictably rebel at the hideous indignity of Crowded Jails, which it regards as a social blight far more intolerable than nightly (ratings-booster) crowded-neighborhood street-shootings of innocent citizens.

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

²⁴ See H.&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 fingerpointing nitcom.

ever-deeper into debt) as it would have cost to stay solvent if the debt had never been incurred in the first place.

I4 Been wondering why interest rates have stayed so low for so long in the post-Carter era? Suggestion: if interest rates now suddenly doubled, the cost of paying the annual interest on the (ballooning Reagan-Bush)²⁵ US National Debt would double. And thus (§I3) the annual budget deficit would double.

I5 Before 1968, the GOP was regarded as unprogressive. But since 1968, it has given us (besides the foregoing):

[a] the first demonstration of simultaneous inflation & recession (Nixon), and

[b] our first booted President (also Nixon).

Let's admit it: we all underestimated the Republicans.

J Historians' Inductive Logic

J1 Inducing the astronomy of the ancients from the paltry leavings we possess of their writings is a favorite DR intellectual pastime. Critical to DR's approach is the working theory that the best known and most enduring ancient science writers are not the most central or reliable figures.²⁶

J2 Fortunately for posterity, my historian-opponents in the attendant ancient-astronomy controversy are much smarter²⁷ than I in such matters, and will set the record straight. The unerring trustworthiness of their approach is testified to by the examples that follow. These enable us to predict those verities which equally brilliant future historians will induce (from the ruins of our putative civilization), by depending upon the most widespead (& thus survivable) accounts:

J3 The most common portrayal of the use of alcoholic beverages in the US media was in TV advertisements. In these snapshots we learn that humans never drank alcohol. They held la-de-da parties to celebrate selecting wines that were either upscale or cheap or allegedly both; beer ads showed unpudgy youngsters posing with, twirling, & fondling beer cans — and laughing healthily at the spectacle of opening them and pouring the contents, lingering over this inexpressibly beautiful experience with closeup slomo clips. But the participants in these advertisements *never* drank the stuff. As a result, they were all youthful, potless, & nonstop-smiling. Curiously, the alcohol industry paid billions to network TV for the incessant visual portrayal of this connection between healthful happiness and nondrinking.

J4 While propane tanks were widely rumored to be intended for supplying heat, we know that their actual purpose was: blowing up buildings. Virtually all press accounts mentioning propane tanks describe explosions, not heating.

J5 Over 99% of film of the sex act surviving from US civilization is what were called "X films". From viewing these (we're told . . .), one learns that the normal sex act always ended in male withdrawal from the vagina, followed by the expression of seed upon some other part of the female. Since this was clearly the standard reproductive act, we conclude that sperm fertilized the human female's body anywhere but through the vagina. Anywhere.

²⁵ Lots of elder USmen prefer Bush because they believe he is more likely to keep the currency stable. (I.e., no Carter-style-Dem rampant multiplication-inflation of the money supply.) The catch: as the US sinks ever deeper into debt, the only way to pay off — or escape the crushing burden of — that debt (without even further enserfing the US public at peon, zero-savings post-tax wages) will be to inflate the currency and thereby render the debt trivial. (Though, Japanese green hypnotism of the US Congress will block that route as long as possible.) Thus, Republican budget policy is guaranteeing the eventual election of the very bunny-money Dimocrats whom Republicans allegedly abhor. Maybe that's why an (officially) Dem-majority Congress has so gleefully signed onto the Reagan-Bush there's-no-tomorrow, schizo-economics squandering — which has become symbolic of the modern GOP White House . . .

²⁶ See *DIO 1.1* ‡1 §B1, ‡7 §G3, *DIO 1.1* §O1, §O4. DR's essential §J logic was set forth in *Queen's Quarterly* 91.4:969 (1984) pp.984&985.

²⁷ For confirmation, just ask any modern defender of the faker C.Ptolemy, whose magnificent *Almajest* so dominated publicly-accepted astronomy that it finally drove out of existence virtually all of the data & astronomical treatises of Aristarchos, Apollonios, & various other merely-honest scientists.

J6 The most Christian man in the history of the US (the most Christian of nations) must have been that exemplary person whose name was chosen (from all the hundreds of millions of US citizens) to be first placed in celestial preservation, for time eternal, on the first plaque left (1969) on the erosion-free Moon. This saint's name: Richard Milhous Nixon.²⁸

J7 From cinema "entertainment" dramas, we learn that almost no ugly wrinkled people smoked — though smooth, healthy, young, attractive people smoked incessantly (with nary a cough) in popular films. Just like in the other cigarette ads.

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 peopled review 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 archonal paragons 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 academic competence — these journals would not embarrass themselves 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 & trifling 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 *Diatribes*. (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-echelon 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] heliocentrists' 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.³⁵ According to a controversial scholium (incompletely-erased, unfortunately), which for a time mischievously confused several naive idealists (each happily enlightened since), *DIO* is 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 softhearted film producers to help out the poor misunderstood tobacco lobby. (Only the hardest cynic could suppose that a film's kindness to weed-interests was performed in return for generous under-the-table fiscal support.)³⁹ But subtlety has not

³² ‡3 §C15.

³³ See likewise at *J.HA* 1.2 fn 58.

³⁴ See *Journal for Hysterical Astronomy* 1.2 §H2, fn 127, & fn 148.

³⁵ E.g., *DIO* 1.1 [‡3 §D1] mistakenly-if-understandably made Muffia singer-entertainer Noel Coward Swerdlow's middle initial "T" (presumably for "ToeDeLine": best pronounced with extreme care) instead of the correct "C" [fn 6]. Thus, due to this grievous error, the credit for discovering the final Hipparchan (UH) solar theory [*DIO* 1.1 ‡6, *DIO* 1.2 §G10] naturally fell in due time to the renowned orbit-authorities of the Muffia.

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 'news had already effectively made the US a one-newspaper nation even before 2000 AD.) This was obviously no regress but progress. Like unto the triumph of monotheism in the 4th century AD.

³⁹ [Note added 1993: While here on the subject of corruption in filmdom, 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, anyway. However, instead of taking such care, most producers just sloppily convert old film footage at the standard modern 5/4 ratio (30/24), which is used to convert current 24 frame/sec films into video. The 1925 scifi film, *The Lost World* (based on a 1912 A.C.Doyle novel which DR has long believed was triggered by M.Conway's from-the-audience comments upon P.Fawcett's 1910 RoyGeogrSoc lecture, reprod at p.530 of *GeogrJ* 35.5:513) 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

²⁸ We thank our childhood friend, Richard Lee Smith, for suggesting this item.

²⁹ DR aside: O Gingerich has made the unintentionally-revealing observation that certain Hist.sci folk are now confusing the words "principle" and "principal". (See fn 6.) Ah, these revealing capitalist slips. I note that, after explorer-hoaxer R.Peary became a millionaire & stock investor c.1910, his correspondence occasionally uses the word "cheque" when he means: verify.

³⁰ See, e.g., the Van Helden review cited at *DIO* 1.2 fn 3.

³¹ Another theory has it that the *DIO* publisher's demise was related to a reputed motto of his, a printable version of which is: "Never kiss a jackboot, especially if it's trying to neck."

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),⁴⁰ 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, 10^m 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 [lights Randall's cig], and throat. I'm an M.D. [Immediately lights own cig.]

M Masterpiece Theatrical Integrity

M1 As tentatively predicted,⁴¹ 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 mismatch (*QJRAS* 1985 p.514) of RAS Vice President David Hughes (*J.HA* centerpiece of *DIO 1.1*: ‡8 §B-§E & Table A).

M2 As for the same RAS Vice President's alleged calendaric proof (*Journal for the History of Astronomy* 1986 p.189) of alleged British priority in seeing Comet Halley (*DIO 1.1* ‡8 §G): the *JHA's* esteemed Editor-for-Life has indicated no interest in correcting that hilarious bit of typically unrefereed 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?

scrunching permitted advertisers to get in more commercials during a film.) Recently, having noticed discrepancies in the actual-vs-official times of Cinemax (cable) films, I became curious as to the cause and started by comparing Cinemax versions to rental versions. I was amazed to find that Cinemax is scrunching films, commonly (but not always) at a 6/5 ratio, thus shortening them by precisely 4%. But why? (Not to get in more ad-time: Cinemax doesn't even have ads.) Answer: mere *scheduling* convenience. While The Movie Channel starts films at odd times (like 9:25 PM), its competitor Cinemax prefers (especially in primetime) to start on the whole-hour or half-hour (like 9:30 PM). Thus, if a film is so inconsiderate as to last, say, 93^m (which, if it started at 8 PM, would cause it to bump the next film's starting time to c.9:35 PM), Cinemax will scrunch it down to 89^m — all so that the following film can start at the round time, 9:30 PM. (The intent is obvious, since the only films which Cinemax scrunches are ones that are just a little bit over 90^m or a similarly round time.) Classic films are less likely to be mistreated thus. However, even so wellknown a film as *Road Warrior* has suffered the Cinemax scrunch. In any case, I find the practice almost as offensive as its sneakiness. No notice is given by Cinemax. Or the media's film-promoters aka "critics". (One recalls these same parties' years of obsessive attacks on Ted Turner's colorization of old black&white films — which is harmless since most TV sets have a black&white button. The anti-colorization hysteria was obviously just the anti-Turner crowd's way of sniping at him, since the far more serious scrunching-vogue has barely been noticed by these folks.)]

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 Velikovskiy'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.

⁴¹ *DIO 1.1* ‡8 fn 29.